**LBJ: Warm-hearted and Half-demented** *Robert Coles*

# THE NEW REPUBLIC

Ambassador College
AUG 6 1976

A Journal of Politics and the Arts—August 7 & 14, 1976, 60 cents

NEWSPAPER
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE LTD
300 W GREEN ST
PASADENA CALIF 91123

## Feeble Grand Old Party

*Henry Fairlie*

**Ford's Buckley Option**—*Ken Bode*
**Nixon's Devils**—*John Osborne*
**Imprisoned India**—*Azad*
**Indentured to Pensions**—*Tom Stevenson*

*Roger Rosenblatt on the Carter Congregation*
*Jeffrey Hart and Stanley Weintraub on Sports*
*Sidney Hook and Robert A. Rosenstone on Revolutionists*

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# TRB

from Washington ®
August 7 & 14, 1976

## The Incumbent

The last time a party didn't nominate a Presidential Incumbent was Rutherford B. Hayes. I thought about it as I leaned back against the trunk of an accommodating elm tree on the White House lawn the other day.

We were waiting for Mr. Ford. His staff had thought up a setting whereby he would be super-presidential—a press conference outdoors with the North colonnade as backdrop. A catbird warbled in one of the trees. An ambulance shrieked down the Avenue—*"Wow, wow, wow!"*

Tourists looked curiously at us through the iron rails. There is always that little group in front of the White House, rain or shine.

The President was late so I went over and sat against an elm and thought about Rutherford B. Hayes. ("B" stands for Birchard.) You remember him. He got in by a fluke and was married to "Lemonade Lucy." He lived in that big white house. He was a pleasant-faced, full-bearded, Midwestern lawyer who tried to do the right things in a rather bumbling way like Civil Service reform; not a touch of brilliance or magnetism in him anywhere. His big antagonist was another Republican, tough, Senator Roscoe Conkling, the "New York Colossus," who argued that people who tried to reform the spoils system (like Hayes) were effeminate—"man-milliners, the dilettante and carpet knights of politics." They threw Hayes out.

Mr. Ford appeared at 1:30 and I scrambled back into the tight crowd, arranged like a horseshoe—about 100 reporters and camera crews and TV people. Across the way was the old granite-gingerbread State-War-Navy building now called the "Executive Office Building." Fifty years ago it held all three departments. Jimmy Carter is going to shrink them all back to size again.

Questions were sharp, and personal, and without rancor, as they are in the Washington political game. It would astound other nations. Democrats had implied that Mr. Ford wasn't smart enough to be President; did he think he was smart enough? Mr. Ford standing there composedly in a striped gray suit and blue shirt (why should a man wear a *vest* on a hot day?) smiled good-naturedly. He thought he was smart enough. He is a likable figure, sandy hair and eyebrows, hands clasped calmly behind him or brought out occasionally for emphasis, not taking offense. Reporters tempted him; how did he assess Jimmy Carter? Did he think the Carter-Mondale ticket beatable? (The latest Louis Harris poll shows Carter 66 percent, Ford 27—one of the biggest chasms in history.) "Absolutely," said Mr. Ford, registering confidence.

Yes, Mr. Ford went on, answering another question, he had pardoned Richard Nixon—and he would do it again. It brought back the episode. Mr. Ford has been in office now two years next week—August 9, 1974. A crushing question for this modest congressman of 24 years was what to do with the stinking mess he inherited. One Sunday morning he went to church and, on September 8, unexpectedly gave Nixon a "full, free and absolute pardon" explaining afterward that "my conscience says it is my duty." His Gallup poll rating plunged 21 points in one of the sharpest air pockets ever recorded, as of course he knew it would. Newspapers raged; it deprived us all of a state trial that would have been one of the gaudiest shows in history and that might still be going on in 1976. What a choice to dump on a new President. If I'd been Ford, I'm inclined to think I would have gone to church and made the same decision he did.

I got to thinking about President Ford and Rutherford B. Hayes at the press conference, and later. My hunch is that in the present day the Republicans' suicidal yen to nominate Ronald Reagan (with or without liberal Dick Schweiker of Pennsylvania) will abate and I suspect that John Connally thinks so, too. He has finally and unexpectedly come out for Ford. Does Ford have a chance to beat Carter? Oh—maybe.

Mr. Ford's strength is that they're all picking on him, and he's an underdog, like Harry Truman, and doing his best. From my point of view his two-year economic record is terrible. With a 7.5 percent unemployment rate he still vetoes the modest 3.9 billion-dollar jobs bill. He has so little style and brilliance that he is not able to blot out Reagan merely by flashing his Incumbency. He holds only rare White House press conferences, which should be the steady link between him and the public (FDR had two a week). He has not been able to persuade the nation even yet that we teeter on the abyss of an oil shortage. (It isn't enough to say the nation won't listen; he should make it listen.)

Mr. Ford's asset is that he is an attractive man, obviously doing what he thinks is right, who says the same things in private that he says in public. Also that he is running against a man whom people haven't quite yet accepted, Jimmy Carter. Another way of putting it is that in this election Jimmy Carter is running against Jimmy Carter. It may be a close race.

I keep wondering in the Carter statements if he fully understands the Washington he's talking about; he's anti-Washington and says he's going to reorganize the government. Fine, that has been done before; it's still much the same. He says he's going to take a year of studying before submitting his big tax shake-up; the trouble is that a new President gets a honeymoon of about 180 days, and if he wants action he'd better arrive with plans in his knapsack. Gov. Carter's close-knit, youthful, attractive, knee-jerk team worries me: already *The New York Times'* conservative columnist William Safire is asking about Saudi Arabia's $80,000-a-year contract with Patrick Caddell, 26, the chief Carter pollster who reportedly has other lucrative clients like Exxon, Arco, Shell and Sun. Jimmy Carter tut-tuts it.

When the governor met New York businessmen a reporter quoted him: "I'd rather lose the election, and even my wife, than to betray that confidence (the American public has) in me." That kind of statement, alas, is easy to caricature.

So we turned back thoughtfully to the presidential press conference on the White House lawn the other day, with the fountain, and the government workers picnicking across the way in LaFayette park, and the five movie cameras waiting for Jerry Ford to say something brilliant and electrifying. He didn't.

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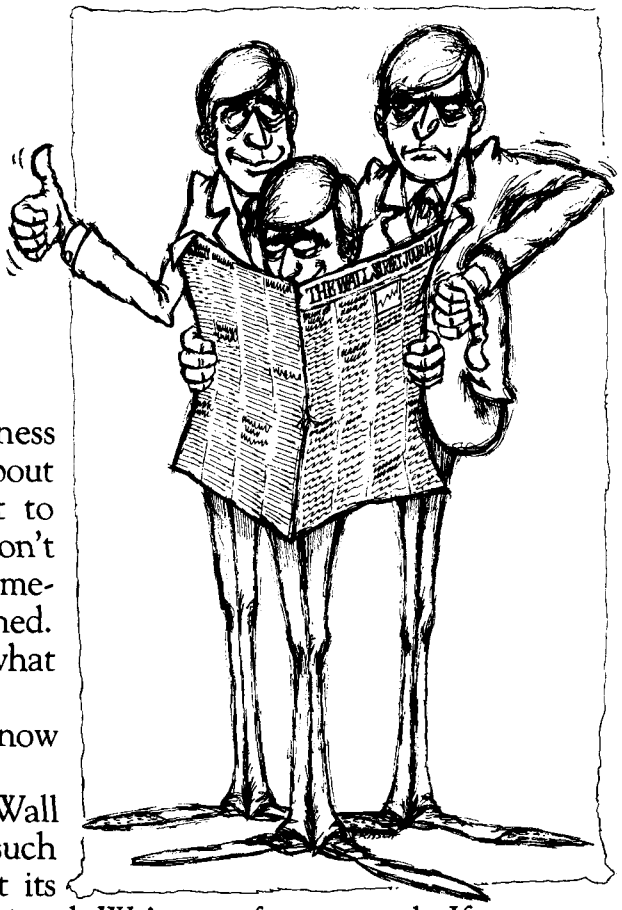


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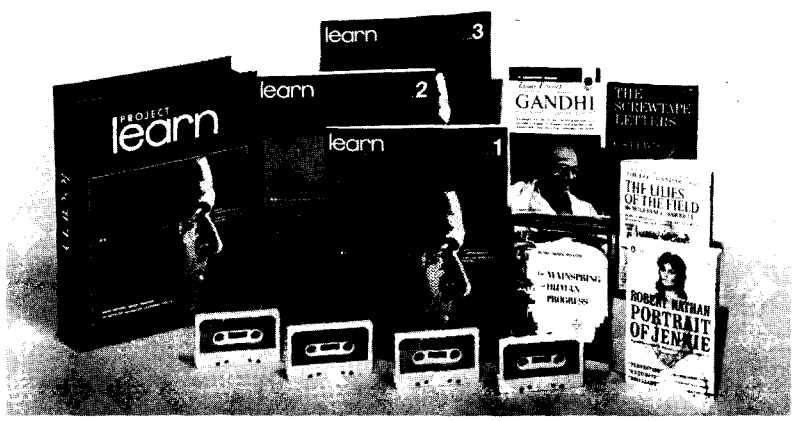

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**THE NEW REPUBLIC** *A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 175, No. 6 & 7, Issue 3213 & 3214, August 7 & 14, 1976. (The first three numbers of Volume 175 were inadvertently omitted.) Published weekly (except the issues of January 3, July 10, August 14, August 28) and distributed by* The New Republic, Inc., *1220 19th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20036. Phone 331-7494. Single copy, 60¢; Yearly subscriptions, $21; foreign, $24; students, $14. Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions, undelivered copies and changes of address to Subscription Department,* The New Republic, *381 West Center Street, Marion, Ohio 43302.* *Copyright 1976 by The New Republic, Inc.* *Item g. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Reader's Guide.*

Contents

7 Comment
Numbered Accounts
8 Ford's Buckley Option—*Ken Bode*
11 White House Watch: Nixon's Devils —*John Osborne*
13 Feeble Grand Old Party—*Henry Fairlie*
17 South Africa's Coloureds—*Benjamin Pogrund*
19 A Letter From Mrs. Gandhi's India—*Azad*
23 In Hock to Pensions—*Tom Stevenson*
26 Films—*Stanley Kauffmann*
27 Books—Reviews by *Robert Coles, Emmett H. Buell, Jr., Peter McGrath, Roger A. Rosenstone, Sidney Hook, Stanley Weintraub, Jeffrey Hart*
30 Reconsideration: Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*—*Eric Larsen*
32 The Back of the Book—*Roger Rosenblatt*

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# Numbered Accounts

The Swiss bank account, once regarded as the distinctive tool of swindlers and spies, has now become a routine link in the international financing of many American businesses. This proved to be true in 1974 and 1975 when the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) began looking into the abuse of Swiss accounts by American companies that were using them to launder millions of dollars worth of political payoffs. According to the SEC staff, the practice continues today. As everyone knows, the attraction of Swiss banks is less that they are especially sound, efficient or convenient, than that they are discreet. They provide their customers on request with secret accounts, identifiable only by number. The customers may then do business with the bank without using their names. This means that an inquiring outsider, even if the outsider is the United States Government, cannot ask for the records of Mr. X. If a bank is asked for the records of a particular person or corporation with a secret account, it merely tells the FBI or SEC or whoever is inquiring that the name in question does not appear on its books. This tradition of secrecy has made Swiss bankers wealthy, and frustrated some important fraud and bribery cases.

The best documented corporate slush fund was the one used by Gulf Oil. Because investigators for the SEC picked up the Gulf case after the Watergate special prosecutor had finished with it, we know much more about corporate abuse of Swiss accounts today than we did just a couple of years ago. The SEC made Gulf describe its secret accounts in detail so that the public would have a better idea of how such things are managed. The Gulf report, written by the eminent international attorney John McCloy and published in December, described how Gulf had funneled $12 million through foreign bank accounts to government officials in the US and other countries. At least half the payments went through a Swiss account; to this day Gulf claims it doesn't know who received some of that money. Gulf and the SEC together have been able to track down the recipients of only about one-third of the cash given out between 1960 and 1972. Other companies used similar gimmicks for hiding money, though not always the Swiss route. Funds have been laundered through Liechtenstein, the Caymans, Panama, Bermuda and the Bahamas. In the two years that this investigation has been underway, more than

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100 companies have confessed to running some sort of "questionable payments" system.

Since it began looking at slush funds, the SEC has learned of other criminal schemes made possible by secret foreign accounts. As in the Watergate case, some prestigious American corporations and many individuals are involved. The SEC suspects, for example, that some American executives are making millions of dollars by using inside information and trading stock in their own companies. The identity of these people is unknown, however, because they are protected by Swiss accounts. Chairman of the SEC Roderick Hills described a couple of recent cases to the House Monetary and Consumer Affairs subcommittee in June. He said that in one instance, "A block of more than a quarter of a million shares of stock of a well-known US company was sold by a Swiss bank on a major US securities exchange just prior to the public disclosure of significant adverse news concerning the company." He did not know who did the selling, but he said the SEC strongly suspects it was someone in the company. In another case, some Swiss and other foreign banks bought about 40,000 shares of stock in a company just before the company raised the value of its stock. Whoever was behind the deal made a fortune. The SEC has reached an impasse in both of these investigations because it has been blocked by the obstinate Swiss bankers. An SEC officer refused to name companies involved because, he said, "we have no evidence that the transactions were illegal."

According to Chairman Hills, Swiss accounts have also been used to disguise the purchase of stock in US companies when the purchaser wants to remain anonymous. Foreigners are required by law to divulge their stock holdings when they acquire five percent interest in an American company, but recently some foreigners have used secret accounts to evade this law. In one case, the Swiss Bank Corporation and the Swiss government helped one man break his 10 percent interest in the General Refractories Company into small blocks, each under a different name, so that he could avoid revealing his identity to the SEC. In another case, a foreign bank offered to sell a controlling interest in a US company to some Europeans even though the bank was not officially listed as having a large interest in the company. It had evaded the reporting law.

Although the SEC has led the way in investigating the abuse of foreign bank accounts, it is not the agency with the primary responsibility for doing so. In a sense, it is doing the job that others ought to have done. Congress passed a bill called the Foreign Bank Secrecy Act in 1970 that assigned the job of policing foreign accounts to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and other offices in the Treasury Department. Congress gave the IRS new investigative tools and asked it to attack this silk shirt version of white-collar crime. In the six years since then, little has been done. The IRS, according to the staff of the House Monetary and Consumer Affairs subcommittee, has shirked its duty. Instead, the SEC has done most of the investigating, often using documents borrowed from the IRS. Far from being praised for this work, however, the SEC has drawn criticism from businessmen and administration officials for being overzealous and overstepping its bureaucratic bounds. (See "Elliot Richardson on Bribery," *TNR*, July 24, 1976.) Attempts are now being made to fence the SEC into a narrower role.

The first step in this process took place last year. An amendment to some otherwise harmless legislation made it impossible for the SEC to take action against any "person" in the securities business if the "person" is a bank. SEC Chairman Hills said the result is that "We may only be able to proceed against a securities firm broker, lawyer or accountant and not be able to proceed against a bank involved." Hills could not understand how this change in the law slipped through without being caught. Rep. Benjamin Rosenthal (D, NY), chairman of the House Monetary and Consumer Affairs Subcommittee, was also puzzled, but he concluded, "These things do not happen by accident around here. Somebody asked somebody to do something."

A second restriction of SEC authority is being considered as this is written. A part of the Tax Reform Act now before the Senate would make it impossible for the SEC to obtain tax and banking data from the IRS as it has in the past. If this is approved, the SEC will be forced to go to court each time it needs foreign bank data from the IRS and, more important, it will have to prove each time that it needs the data for a criminal case. The nature of foreign banking investigations is such that the SEC may well be unable to prove criminality unless it has the very documents it is being denied. This change is intended to protect the privacy of individual tax returns.

While it is true that some bureaucrats in the Nixon administration misused the IRS files, none worked for the SEC. Indeed, the SEC has never been accused of invading personal privacy in this way. It would be a mistake, we think, to restrict the investigative role of the only agency that has been at all aggressive in exposing political slush funds and the abuse of foreign bank accounts in schemes like the one engineered by Robert Vesco. It would be particularly ironic if Congress were to weaken the SEC's authority as part of the "Watergate reforms."

## Neutralizing Schweiker

# Ford's Buckley Option

By the time Ronald Reagan announced last week that he had asked the liberal Sen. Richard Schweiker to be his running mate, nearly every respected public opinion

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poll in the country had decided Ford is the more electable, and most newspaper and network delegate counts had put the President at or just below the magic 1130 needed for nomination. Reagan's surprise announcement was obviously a move designed to discombobulate both the polls and the delegate totals. Cause confusion it did. *The New York Times'* commentator James M. Naughton surveyed the landscape the next morning and said bravely that Reagan's choice of Schweiker "was a stroke of tactical brilliance or a devastatingly bad mistake." Later it appeared the Reagan move hurt more than helped; there was no rush among delegates to switch to Reagan.

Assuming that President Ford will be nominated, Reagan's announcement will almost certainly affect his choice for second spot. For one thing, Reagan-Schweiker has the image of a unifying ticket, and Ford's selection must at least meet the approval of those who count themselves the real Republican majority. For another, although the vice presidential nominee is expected to be of little help except perhaps in his home state, Reagan's choice does enhance the former California governor's claim to be electable. All of this shortens Ford's list and raises the odds on some second spot possibilities.

Now numbered in the category of long shots:

■ Anne Armstrong—a Texan, longtime wheel on the GOP chariot, now serving as American ambassador to Britain. Mrs. Armstrong is for Gerald Ford what Barbara Jordan was on Jimmy Carter's list of vice presidential possibilities—a token presence.

■ Elliot Richardson, whose Saturday Night Massacre guise of incorruptibility remains his only asset, is too moderate to satisfy the true believers, and his service under Nixon and Ford as the head of four major cabinet departments (Justice, Defense, Commerce and HEW) makes him a composite symbol of the Washington bureaucracy that Jimmy Carter is both running against and promising to reorganize.

■ Sen. Charles Percy (Ill.) and Robert Ray (Ia.). Both are attractive candidates and highly electable in their home states, but disqualify themselves on two counts: both are moderate to liberal in philosophy (by GOP standards) and both Midwestern in origin. Ford is already reasonably strong in his home region and must use the second spot to improve his chances elsewhere.

■ Sens. Howard Baker or William Brock of Tennessee. Baker is younger and helps deflect the Watergate stench by his prominent and relatively evenhanded service on the Ervin committee. Brock is more appealing to conservatives, but he must stand for reelection this year. Both are on the list as border state vice presidential possibilities intended to help Ford maintain a steady drift toward a solid GOP South that began in 1948. But Jimmy Carter is the real article, native son to the Deep South and at the top of the ticket; it is doubtful that a Republican alternative twice diluted (border state and second spot) could make any appreciable difference.

■ Gov. Daniel Evans of Washington is a relatively progressive figure from way outside the nation's capital who might supply some strength in the West, an area of notable weakness for Jimmy Carter in the primaries. Evans' strong record and no-strings-attached reputation as state chief executive might also appeal to the growing independent vote. Before the Reagan challenge skewed the Republican political spectrum so badly that Gerald Ford is now considered a moderate in need of a tilt to the right, Evans might have been an acceptable running mate. Now, he is far too liberal.

Ford's choice will determine the GOP campaign strategy. It is a given fact that he must try to unify the party, beyond which he has only two options: one, play to normal Republican strength; two, play to apparent weaknesses in the Carter-Mondale offering. Either way it is obvious that Ford's choice must stand well with the delegates in Kansas City. If Ford chooses the first option, he will try to hold the Midwest and attempt to win in the sunbelt (South and Southwest) by picking Ronald Reagan or John Connally.

■ Reagan: By almost unanimous agreement, the vice presidential spot is still his if he wants it. He is a convincing campaigner, has won twice in California, demonstrated his voter appeal among Republicans in both the South and the West, and is the single most effective television performer since the medium became a force in national politics. Reagan, of course, mollifies the conservatives; nearly half of his supporters told national pollster Louis Harris that if their favorite is not chosen at the Republican convention, they would cast their vote for Carter in November. But if Reagan willingly accepts second place in a Kansas City unity fest to match the one at Madison Square Garden, those doubts are automatically quelled. Nevertheless, Jimmy Carter is running so far ahead of both Ford and Reagan in both the border states and the South that it is doubtful that the GOP can be competitive in those places even with both men on the ticket. Any hope of maintaining the trend toward Southern Republican presidential majorities this year must depend on a strategy of prying the Wallace vote loose from the Democrats. But Ronald Reagan's private enterprise, economic conservatism and his drawing room campaign style do nothing for whatever remains of the hard-core, quasi-populist Wallaceites who have received some reassuring signals from Carter.

■ John Connally is the vice presidential choice most favored in surveys of GOP delegates; in an Associated Press poll of nearly 2000 delegates, for example, 71 percent of Ronald Reagan's supporters favored Connally for second spot. If, as some believe, the Schweiker announcement has weakened Reagan at the inner core of his own strength, President Ford might be tempted to do himself some good among undecided delegates—in the still uncommitted, unit rule Mississippi delega-

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tion, for instance—by trumping Reagan's move and naming Connally before Kansas City.

Connally would also be the most controversial possible GOP choice. On the one hand, he is Southern enough in roots, style and rhetoric to enable Ford to mount a regional challenge to Carter where the Democrats now seem unassailable. He is also strong enough at home to make Texas, an important electoral college state, at least a toss-up and to force Carter to campaign hard in a place he was able to take for granted during the primaries. He is conservative enough to earn the blessings of the patriarch, Barry Goldwater. Most importantly, Connally is a hardball campaigner, tailor made to take the low road as Gerald Ford's Spiro Agnew while Ford postures himself above the battle. "It's a standard technique," says one GOP strategist. "John Connally is one of the few tough cookies remaining in the Republican party, and Ford needs someone who can raise all the flags on Jimmy Carter."

On the other hand, John Connally has some significant disadvantages. A pairing of the man who pardoned Richard Nixon with the man who advised him to burn the incriminating tapes on the White House lawn brings back all the nightmares, a spectre neatly offset by Jimmy Carter's piety. Connally himself is, at best, a moral question mark. Following his acquittal in the 1975 milk fund trial, one unpublished national poll showed that more than two-thirds of the American public still believed he was guilty of taking a $10,000 bribe while serving as Secretary of the Treasury. Connally's shortcomings will be offset only by the number of Democrats—including National Party Chairman Robert Strauss—who trooped forward as character witnesses on his behalf in federal court. It won't help much.

If Connally's late conversion is acceptable in the GOP—and his fund-raising abilities there testify that it is—his choice as Gerald Ford's running mate would have the certain effect of inflaming partisanship in the party he jilted.

Should Gerald Ford as nominee adopt the more daring game plan of challenging the Democratic ticket where it seems most vulnerable, he would be opting for a GOP strategy of an earlier day, in effect, conceding whatever he has to the South and seeking his electoral majority in the Great Plains, the Midwest and the large industrial states of the Northeast. Ford is already strong in the heartland of the Midwest, and in several larger swing states (Illinois, Indiana and Michigan, for example). He is supported at lower levels of the ballot by strong Republican state tickets. With this base, the President might seek to make the election close by carrying the battle to the bailiwick of the Democratic party in places like Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island. In these states, parts of the traditional Democratic constituency remain cautious and even mistrustful of their party's ticket, and these voters constitute Carter's most important weakness. Draw an arc from Chicago down to the Mason-Dixon line and across the Atlantic Coast. The white ethnic and Catholic voters in these parts are the soft underbelly of this year's Democratic coalition. They are people concerned about neighborhoods, as the shorthand has it, voters who were not noticeably enthusiastic about the choice of Mondale. They were jolted when Carter spoke of "Eyetalians" in his acceptance speech. They are foresquare against what the Democratic platform says on abortion, and they take little solace from Carter's gentle demurrers. Catholics and white ethnics still have Democratic leanings, but what was once a strong party tie has come badly unraveled in the past two elections. In 1968, Richard Nixon and George Wallace together managed to break up what had previously been almost a Democratic bloc vote, and four years later a majority of this group found their way into the Republican column for the first time since 1924. The white-Catholic-ethnics are also located in states where drop-offs in registration and voting have been most notable and where potential liberal Democratic support for the Independent candidacy of Eugene McCarthy makes it more likely that they will constitute a critical swing vote in November.

One vice presidential selection would most help Gerald Ford maximize this strategy: he is Sen. James Buckley, Conservative-Republican from New York. Buckley is a Catholic and notably devout at that. Already deficient to working-class Catholics on particular political concerns, the Democratic ticket is the more vulnerable since it is only the second since 1960 to be without a Catholic. Buckley, of course, is conservative, a certifiable, ultra *National Review* brand, completely acceptable to the Reagan bloc. On the hustings, he could be Mr. Social Issue, opposed to abortion, opposed to busing, opposed to gun control, a part of Washington only as a spokesman for the truculent opposition. He is articulate, honest, with a reputation as a hard worker. One Buckley disadvantage is his personal style, a bit arch in manner and lacking, it is said, in empathy for working people. But he recognizes this liability, and the man who won his New York Senate seat six years ago on the coded slogan "Isn't it time *we* had a Senator?" is running this year as "Senator Jim Buckley."

"I don't think it matters who he picks as a running mate," says conservative Republican theorist Kevin Phillips, commenting on the odds in a Ford-Carter contest. "There's no one who can bail out Gerald Ford unless someone finds Jimmy Carter in the closet with a ouji board." The odds are long, according to all the polls and all the wisest heads. And Gerald Ford is playing from a very short suit. But James Buckley may be the one wild card left in his hand that offers the President a chance to alter both the odds and the outcome.

**Ken Bode**

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## White House Watch

# Nixon's Devils

A wish to believe in and promote public belief in what may be called the devil theory of Richard Nixon's downfall is surfacing among a number of his former White House assistants. Two of them, H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, fell with him and are appealing convictions and prison sentences for Watergate offenses. The devil theory exists in several forms and degrees. It ranges from the flat assertion in a few instances that Nixon is the innocent victim of conspiratorial plotters or at the least of hostile journalists and politicians who hated him and all he stood for, to the assortment of lesser suspicions summed up in a remark that recurs again and again among his former associates. Most of these people don't deny that Richard Nixon deserved impeachment, escaped it only by resigning August 9 two years ago, and would have been brought to trial in a common court if Gerald Ford had not pardoned him of any crimes that he may have committed while he was President. The remark is, "There are some things that have never been explained," and those who utter it seem to take a curious comfort from it. It has no bearing upon guilt or innocence. But it does suggest—to them anyhow—that the disgrace of their leader would not have been as complete and abject as it was, and that the pressures which drove him from office would not have been so cruelly displayed and applied if unexplained forces and factors had not been at work.

The extent to which Richard Nixon in retirement at San Clemente subscribes to the devil theory is unknown. He has never attributed his downfall to his own and his confederates' misdeeds. In his announcement of his decision to resign on August 8, 1974; in his farewell moan to his staff on August 9; and in his introductions to his collected 1973 and 1974 presidential papers, he admitted nothing more than "mistakes and misjudgments" and blamed the need to resign upon the loss of congressional support. He recently accepted disbarment in New York rather than include in a letter of resignation from the New York bar an admission of Watergate guilt. In *Born Again*, Charles Colson's account of his White House service with Nixon and of his subsequent conversion to Christ—a conversion that I neither doubt nor deride after reading the book—Colson describes a talk with Nixon in the Lincoln Sitting Room in the executive mansion. Colson says he asked, "Mr. President, is our conversation being recorded?," and describes Nixon's reaction: "'What do you mean, recorded? Who would do that to us?' He sat upright in his chair, the smile gone, a flash of fear in his face. 'Would *they* do that?,' he demanded."

The preeminent devil of the theory in most of its forms is the Central Intelligence Agency. An associated devil is Alexander Butterfield, a former air force colonel and college friend of Bob Haldeman who served as Haldeman's deputy from the start of the Nixon presidency in 1969 until April, 1973. He disclosed the existence of the Nixon taping system to the Senate Watergate committee staff on July 13, 1973 and in public testimony on July 16. The CIA has been suspected, accused and exonerated of everything from planning, staffing and executing the Watergate burglary of the Democratic National Committee headquarters on June 17, 1972, to using its knowledge of that stupidity and of such White House misbehavior as wiretapping officials and journalists to bully and betray President Nixon and his associates in Watergate sin. Some Nixon people have never forgiven Butterfield for disclosing the taping system and then, in subsequent congressional testimony, discussing with obvious avidity and hostility Nixon quirks that suggested mental instability. Haldeman, Butterfield and others in the Nixon White House told me in early 1969 that Haldeman had persuaded Butterfield to interrupt a promising air force career and join the Nixon staff. Last June, months after Butterfield had been accused on extremely flimsy grounds of having been a CIA plant in the White House, and after Chairman Frank Church of the Senate's special intelligence committee had said the committee found no evidence that this was true, Haldeman dealt with the related suspicions of Butterfield and the CIA in a syndicated newspaper series. Haldeman said:

"Alex originally approached the White House on his own initiative—not because I recruited him. He was soon to become an air force general. I have never understood why he insisted, against my advice, in dropping his commission. Or why he suddenly wanted to be part of the Nixon team. Was Butterfield a CIA agent? Maybe. I just don't know. In retrospect, I'm ambivalent as to whether the agency was out to get Nixon. I don't dismiss it as an impossibility. I do believe that there are a number of unanswered questions about the break-in at the Watergate. The agency had the capacity and perhaps, unknown to me, the motivation."

Ken Clawson, a last-ditch loyalist who was Nixon's last director of communications, told *The Washington Star* in the first interview he has given since he suffered a severe stroke: "Why in the world would Butterfield mention something about the internal taping system? I can only conclude that he was a CIA agent." Why being a CIA agent should have made Butterfield want to disclose the system that he had supervised and hidden since 1971 is never explained. Other comments upon the Haldeman-Clawson suggestion and accusation are in order. Butterfield disclosed the taping system only in answer to a direct question under oath, first at a staff interrogation and then in public. It was a matter of truth or perjury. Butterfield did not "approach the White House"; he approached his friend Haldeman in New York, before the 1969 inauguration. Butterfield

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says and I believe that Haldeman insisted that he retire from active duty—not "drop his commission"—in order to qualify for the only White House job then open to him. Butterfield's story that the possibility of being for awhile at the top and center of national power excited and attracted him seems believable to me; it was true of Nixon assistants who have never been accused of being CIA plants.

John Ehrlichman's recently published novel, *The Company*, deals with the CIA as devil in a restrained fashion. His fictional CIA director, a character whose resemblance to former CIA Director Richard Helms is not even thinly disguised, uses his knowledge of Watergate doings and particularly of the bugging of officials and journalists to blackmail the incumbent President into protecting the director and a former President who died in office. Ehrlichman's director wanted concealment of his and the deceased President's part in a CIA murder that in effect sabotaged a Caribbean operation similar to John F. Kennedy's Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. There is a suggestion that Helms and CIA in his day knew about Watergate and the illegal surveillance associated with it. But *The Company* does not imply, as Haldeman does, that the CIA may have incited and entrapped Nixon and his Watergate companions.

A leading expert on the CIA and its possible involvement in Watergate is Senator Howard Baker of Tennessee, the ranking Republican on the Senate Watergate committee and the second-ranking Republican on Frank Church's special intelligence investigating committee. The press tended during both investigations to dismiss Baker as a Republican apologist. The fact is that he refused to be the stooge of the Nixon and Ford people. With the help of Fred Thompson, the chief minority counsel on the Watergate committee, and a small minority staff, Baker dug and dug into indications—notably the preponderance of past and present CIA people in the original Watergate burglary operation—that the CIA may somehow have been involved. His unproven suspicions that it was were set forth in an individual supplement to the Senate Watergate report and in *At That Point in Time*, Fred Thompson's fascinating book about the minority staff's role, frustrations and unresolved doubts.

As a member of the Church committee Baker dug again, deeper and more thoroughly than has been generally reported. His conclusion, again stated as an individual supplement to the committee report, must stand until further notice as the last and best word on the subject: "I wish to state my belief that the sum total of the evidence does not substantiate a conclusion that the CIA per se was involved in the range of events and circumstances known as Watergate. However, there was considerable evidence that for much of the post-Watergate period the CIA itself was uncertain of the ramifications of the various involvements, witting or otherwise, between members of the Watergate burglary team and members of components of the Agency. . . . The investigation . . . produced a panoply of puzzlement. . . . An impartial evaluation . . . compels the conclusion that the CIA, as an institution, was not involved in the Watergate break-in." Devotees of the devil theory will note that this labored statement mostly covers the break-in and does not exclude involvement of CIA individuals in other Watergate chicanery.

Perhaps the most interesting and certainly the least noticed of the Baker minority staff's investigations during the Watergate inquiry was into evidence of Democratic foreknowledge of the break-in. I remember the hoots with which I and other reporters greeted then Vice President Spiro Agnew's suggestion at a 1972 campaign press conference that there was such foreknowledge. The story told by Fred Thompson in *At That Point in Time* involves columnist Jack Anderson, former Democratic chairman Larry O'Brien, various officials of the Democratic committee in O'Brien's time, the Nixon advertising operation in New York known as the November Group, a former Kennedy administration official and Manhattan publisher named William Haddad, and one Arthur James Woolston-Smith, who is described as a New Zealander based in New York with British, Canadian and US intelligence connections. Woolston-Smith is said to have heard about planning for the Watergate break-in and passed the information to Haddad and, through him, to Jack Anderson and Democratic committee officials. Two of Thompson's minority staff, Howard Liebengood and Michael Madigan, and James McCord, the retired CIA operative who led and botched the Watergate burglary, figure in Thompson's sad summation: "Our exploration had covered many months and many witnesses. . . . We looked into an aspect of Watergate that had not been explored before—or since. Liebengood, Madigan and I all came to one conclusion: several people, including some at the Democratic headquarters, had advance knowledge of the Watergate break-in. An obvious effort had been made to conceal facts. . . . But did we have proof—proof beyond a reasonable doubt? The answer, reluctantly, was no. Additionally, for our suspicions to amount to anything conclusive, we would have to tie this advance knowledge to McCord, or someone else on the inside of the Watergate team, or at least to the plainclothesmen on duty the night of the break-in [who made the Watergate arrest]. We had no such link."

Nixon survivors in the Ford White House pay less heed to the devil theory than former associates do. A midlevel survivor says he's never discussed the subject with his colleagues and adds: "I admire a lot of things Richard Nixon did, but I think he just blew it."

**John Osborne**

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# Feeble Grand Old Party

## by Henry Fairlie

Whether or not the voters entrust the country to the Republican party for another four years, one can still say, without fear of much contradiction, that no other great political party in any of the Western democracies has had so inglorious a record as have the Republicans in the past half-century. It is worse than that. The record has been inglorious for most of the century.

Imagine a Republican party toast to those who have carried its banner since Theodore Roosevelt: "I give you, ladies and gentlemen, the party of Warren Harding . . . . *(applause)* . . . . of Calvin Coolidge . . . . *(the applause gathers)* . . . . of Herbert Hoover . . . . *(feet drum the floor)* . . . . of Alf Landon . . . . *(the audience rises)* . . . . of Wendell Willkie . . *(huzzas break across the room)* . . . . of Thomas Dewey . . . . *(the eyes of strong men moisten)* . . . . of Thomas Dewey again . . . . *(tears flow down reddened cheeks)* . . . . of Dwight Eisenhower . . . . *(cheers lift the rafters)* . . . . of Dwight Eisenhower again . . . . *(a roar shakes the room)* . . . . of Richard Nixon . . . . *(guests stand on their chairs)* . . . . of Barry Goldwater . . . . *(there is a stampede)* . . . . of Richard Nixon again . . . . *(hosanna! hosanna!)* . . . . of Richard Nixon yet again . . . . *(shouts of 'Four More Years')* . . . . And in their line, ladies and gentlemen, I give you our new leader, who will lead us to a future as illustrious as our past."

Something must be wrong with a party that has a record like that. Not since Theodore Roosevelt have the Republicans had a really great leader; and hardly one, for Eisenhower cannot really be counted as a Republican, who has not in one way or another been inept. In a spirit of curiosity rather than of partisanship, therefore, this is a phenomenon worth investigating, and trying to explain.

It is not only I who draw the line as far back as Theodore Roosevelt. Here is Robert Humphreys, one of the strategists of the Republican party during the Eisenhower years, writing on December 31, 1958, to Leonard Hall, one of the regular party leaders and chairman of its National Committee: "The Republican Party as a majority party began to die when Theodore Roosevelt died." Here is Jacob Javits writing in 1964: "Following the Theodore Roosevelt era, the progressive spirit in the Republican Party steadily declined." (He also said that it began to revive again with the nomination of Wendell Willkie in 1940, a claim which he might find a little more difficult to make today.) And here is the Ripon Society writing in 1968 of the distance that had grown between the Republican party and the intellectual and professional community in the nation:

> *The gulf first began to open when Theodore Roosevelt left party ranks to form his Bull Moose movement in 1912. It was accentuated during the 1920s and widened further during the New Deal. It was fixed most firmly by the McCarthy experience of the early 1950s. It is a gulf which as Walter Lippmann has written is 'at the root of the Republican decline.'*

Right-wing Republicans will at once protest that these are all voices of liberal Republicans, who were the custodians of the party during much of the period; and they have a point, since the record of ineptness and defeat has been compiled largely under the leadership of the "liberal" or "moderate" or "progressive" Republicans. But at least no one can deny that the leadership of the party since Theodore Roosevelt has been consistently without lustre; usually without purpose; sometimes without honor; and more often than not without success.

To make the point in another way: even if the Republicans were to win in November, it is already clear that they will not win in such a way that they will be regarded as having replaced the Democrats as the normal majority party. We do not hear Republicans today talking of "the emerging Republican majority"; if there is a "Southern strategy" at all, it again belongs to the Democrats. The Republican party is simply not a popular party, which is another way of saying that it is not yet genuinely, after half a century, a governing party: that it still usually governs only by the default of its opponents.

The Republicans whom I know are this year dismayed, and their spirits will not be much raised even if their party should win. "There is no health in us," is their lament, although they usually utter it at greater length, and sometimes miserably into their cups as they puzzle over what is wrong. In fact, their distrust of their own party is so deep that they seem almost to be afraid that it might win. As *The New York Times* has reported, some conservatives openly hope that it will be defeated. But liberal Republicans also speak in private as if they think that the hands of their party are too

*This is the first of a series of articles by Henry Fairlie on the Republican party.*

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nerveless to be entrusted with the reins of power just now. The only Republican who really seems to want power is John Connally, and he is an ex-Democrat.

We must begin with a distinction; it is crucial and will work its way in and out of our story. A *party* is not a *movement;* or perhaps how it needs to be put, to some Republicans, is that a *movement* is not a *party.* It is certainly true that a party that is constantly beset by assault from a movement within it finds it very difficult to act as a party, to win or to recover from defeat.

Movements tend to be ideological; parties tend not to be ideological. Movements tend to have single purposes; parties tend to have many purposes. Movements tend to be exclusive; parties tend to include. In movements the key workers tend to be amateurs; in parties they tend to be regulars. Movements are zealous to capture the party; parties are ambitious to capture office. Movements are willing for the sake of their causes to invite defeat; parties are willing to subdue their causes to the desire to win. My word for movements is *primitive;* my word for parties is *urbane.*

The Goldwater campaign was a *primitive* movement; and so, within the Democratic party, was the McGovern campaign. Although one would hardly apply the word to the man himself, the campaign led by Eugene McCarthy was a *primitive* movement; and I will argue that the Willkie campaign was the first successful eruption of a *primitive* movement within one of the major parties in this century. This year the Reagan campaign has been merely the *primitive* movement led by Barry Goldwater returning to make a second effort: it seems at this writing, to be held back at the pass.

What is most obvious is that, whenever one of these movements has captured or seriously divided a party, that party has lost the election. This does not mean, of course, that the regular party leadership does not also lose elections; and one reason for the persistent strength of the conservative movement in the Republican party is the long record of defeats which the party has suffered since the New Deal, under its conventional or liberal leadership. At least *a priori,* the conservatives have a case. But it is even more clear that movements, when they capture a party, do not win elections. In capturing the party they have already defined themselves so rigidly that they have excluded the voters whom they need to attract if they are to achieve victory: something that happened to the Goldwater movement in 1964, of course, and to the McGovern movement in 1972.

Moreover, when a movement takes itself outside one or the other of the main parties, it does no better, whether the Bull Moose movement in 1912, or the Henry Wallace movement in 1944, or the George Wallace movement when he put himself forward as an Independent. It is often said that the parties in America are weak and getting weaker. There is no real evidence for this. Their character has changed; they can no longer attract and hold support in the same ways as in the past; fewer voters identify themselves with one or other of the main parties than before; ticket-splitting seems to have become more of a habit. But in spite of all this, and much else, the parties go on. Their resilience is striking. Indeed, given the weakness of the national structures of American parties between presidential elections, given that they meet as national parties only once every four years, what is amazing is that they cohere so well.

For 36 years, the national structure of the Republican party, in spite of intermittent attempts to strengthen it, has been lamentably weak: much weaker than that of the Democratic party, even when the Democrats have suffered severe defeats. In saying "for 36 years," I am of course placing the initial responsibility on the Willkie campaign of 1940; and it can be shown that in that campaign, both for the nomination and in the election, lay the seeds of many of the troubles of the Republican party since then. It is not from the New Deal that the Republican party has not recovered, but from the nomination of one of the most preposterous figures ever to lead a major party.

We have just seen the chairman of the Democratic National Committee universally praised for the work he has done between two presidential elections to bring his party to the starting post, fit and ready to run a good race: and to run it under a leader whom he and the National Committee did not at first wish, and whose candidacy they hardly envisaged, but whose first act as leader was to confirm the chairman in his position. For reasons which will become clear in a moment, I believe that this was the most significant act that Jimmy Carter, as an "outsider" in his own party, performed at New York.

In fact, through all the ups and downs of the past 40 years, the national organization of the Democratic party, although of course nothing like that of one of the centralized parties of Europe, has remained a political force on its own account. In 1944, when he was old and ailing and preoccupied with World War II, Franklin Roosevelt was able to leave the conduct of his campaign largely to the National Committee, really to enter it only, as the great campaigner he was, with the devastating (and almost by itself winning) speech about his dog Fala. Even in defeat, as we have just seen, the national organization has retained and exercised its skill and its influence.

There was once a chairman of the Republican National Committee who did the same job as effectively as Robert Strauss. After the devastating defeat which the Republicans suffered in 1936, John Hamilton took the party in hand. By the time the nominating campaigns began in 1939, he had rebuilt the party. The debt from the previous election had been repaid. Republicans had done well in the midterm elections in 1938. On the other side, the Democrats were in trouble and vulnerable. The enthusiasm for the New Deal had

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been dissipated; the deserters from it included men as symbolically if not actually important as James Farley and John Garner; war had broken out in Europe and was threatening the United States; there was the issue of a third term for Roosevelt. This was an election that the Republicans "ought" to have won. But it was thrown away by the eruption of the Willkie movement, and Hamilton saw his work destroyed in three months.

I believe that it was then that the habit—the psychology—of defeat was ingrained into the Republicans. But for the moment I am concerned with only one aspect of the campaign: the reckless destruction of the prestige of the National Committee.

Nominated by the *primitives*, as I have described them, Willkie at once behaved like one. (The fact that he was a liberal Republican—in fact had been registered as a Democrat only a few years before—and that he had the support of what is now called the "Establishment" of the party, does not alter the fact that he won the nomination primarily as a result of the grass-roots activity of the amateurs in the Willkie Clubs.) Sprung from the *primitives*, and himself one in his own brash innocence and amateurishness, he ran one of the most incompetent election campaigns in living memory.

His first act as his party's nominee was to remove Hamilton from the chairmanship of the National Committee (memories of the similar brashness of George McGovern). In fact, the first "idea," if it can be called such, of Willkie was to do without a national chairman at all. With no political experience, never having fought an election before, having no intimate acquaintance with any of the party's leaders, he desperately needed the National Committee and its tried and tested chairman. Instead he replaced him with Joseph Martin, the minority leader in the House of Representatives, who was weighed down with his duties there, did not know how to run a national campaign, and developed no strategy.

But this was not all. Even before he removed Hamilton, Willkie had formed an advisory committee for his campaign under the chairmanship of Harold Stassen, who thus began his long and close association with failure. Willkie allowed the National Committee to have three members on this committee, but already nervous of him, the professionals were more alienated by the removal of Hamilton.

There followed a series of disastrous decisions. He continued to ignore the National Committee. On his own, he announced that the party would spend even less in the whole campaign than the maximum that was permitted by the Hatch Act, even though it was out of office and needed the most widespread campaign that it could mount. He allowed the Willkie Clubs, which had given him the nomination, to continue as independent organizations in the election campaign; and even more absurdly, he allowed another new organization, Democrats for Willkie, to enjoy the same autonomy. Even though he was Willkie's nominee as chairman, Martin had no control over these amateurs, and regular party organizations such as the Young Republicans were embittered and frustrated by their amateur and unproved rivals.

As one Republican leader put it: "It was bad enough for our local party workers to see a bunch of amateurs try to direct the campaign, but it was too much to have these same people ask for voter lists and precinct data which local workers had spent so much time to secure." This rift was never closed, and again one is reminded of other primitive campaigns, Goldwater's and McGovern's.

George Sokolosky, one of the more intelligent campaigners for Willkie, was later to say: "The organization was left to novices and amateurs. Every suggestion as to policy and tactics made to the candidate by the more experienced leaders of the party was, in final implementation, ignored. The amateurs surrounded Mr. Willkie in a tight cordon through which it became increasingly more difficult to send either ideas, criticisms, or suggestions . . . . *A campaign is not a crusade* and not won by noise in unison but by *enthusiastic and coordinated competence.* [My italics.]The latter was lacking throughout." One of the interests of Carter's campaign so far is that, although his nomination was promoted by amateurs, and although he is maintaining his own organization in Atlanta, he is not disdaining the professional and permanent organization of the party.

But my point at this stage is that the National Committee of the Republican party, the body ultimately representing its national organization, has never recovered its prestige within the party since the injury that was inflicted on it by Willkie. It has had some good and competent chairmen since then, but in the end it has always seemed to be a party without the steady resource of an effective organization. This has affected the characters of the Republican candidates who have been chosen. The party had to reach outside itself for a winning candidate in 1952. Its next winning candidate, Richard Nixon, did not really feel any close association with its national organization. Indeed, the power of the Committee for the Re-election of the President in 1972 was exercised by a man as distant from the party, and as disdainful of it, as John Mitchell, in the absence of a National Committee that had any effective influence.

If one were to search today for the reason why an incumbent Republican President has had such difficulty in securing the nomination of his own party, the apparent reasons that are generally discussed are almost certainly of less significance than the lack of prestige, within its own party, from which the Republican National Committee has suffered since 1940. What is more, if conservative Republicans, such as Goldwater and Reagan, have set their *primitives* against the national party organization, the path was blazed for them by a so-called liberal, Wendell Willkie.

Parties, if used, are strong. Parties, if invited, are

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hard-working. Parties, if trusted, are loyal. Parties, if encouraged, are resilient. Parties are shepherds; they round up the flock, count its heads, and do not let either the sheep or the goats stray too far between elections. Moreover, in doing all this, they also help to retain some sense of common purpose and life, which has something to do with the causes for which it fights, but has also to do with its own sense of itself as an organization with a life of its own. There is a party spirit among Democrats, even when they war among themselves, which one misses in the Republican party. Even in 1972, one could still feel the cloth of the Democratic party between one's fingers, even though the cloth was shredded. One could rub the cloth, and know that it was the Democrats.

One could feel it even this year, although it was engaged in an unusual, but one would have thought, permissible display of harmony, because this harmony was not the same as that which was contrived at the Republican convention in 1972. The Republican harmony then had come out of no suffering, and no anguish. This was not true in New York this year. From Barbara Jordan at the beginning to Martin Luther King, Sr., at the end, from the Vietnam veteran against the war to the Vietnam draft evader who were allowed a place in the vice presidential nominations, the evidence of the anguish that the Democratic party has endured was there: the evidence of the two most important issues in American politics in the past decade, the war and civil rights. The cloth may have been rewoven since 1972, but it was the same cloth: rub it and one knows it, and this is true of all great parties in America and in other democracies.

But rub the Republican party, and one's fingers can feel no fiber; they cannot even feel the weave, unless it is indeed only the smooth weave of a man in a gray flannel suit. When I made this point to a Republican, while I was making this investigation, he said with a shake of his head: "I agree, the Republican party does not have a very strong personality. If it and the Democratic party, so to speak, came into a room, I'm afraid that it would be the Democratic party I would want to talk to, even though I then went home with the Republican party I'm married to."

What is more, I suspect it is the conservative Republican who will agree with this more than the liberal Republican. There is at least something knotty in the right-wing Republicans, from Robert Taft to Goldwater and now to Reagan. But all those unknotty liberal Republicans, from Dewey (for in terms of his party, at the time, he counted as a liberal), to Stassen (the long-distance runner who has known only how to sprint, and not even that very well), to Scranton (of whom T.H. White once wrote, "When Scranton moves through the room, the eyes of dowagers caress him as a son, and young girls wriggle"), to Romney (of whom one cannot now remember even the appearance, although one remembers that journalists used to write about his jutting jaw), to Lindsay (who must be somewhere to be found, if one went diligently searching for him), to Percy (whose nickname of Chuck was quickly amended to Chuckles when he arrived in Washington), to Richardson (a man of whom the center sometimes seems to be so soft that one begins to believe that it was of him that Yeats wrote that "the center cannot hold"); and throughout the whole period the one and only, the perhaps most ineffably incompetent politician on the national scene, the All Star of Born Losers, the black hole of the Republican universe into which astronomers gaze wondering if there can really be such a thing as absolute nothingness, the man of whom someone once said that he had raised vacillation to a political principle, who did not have to be buried this year because he had self-destructed so often, the prototypical liberal Republican: the disheveled Nelson A. Rockefeller.

(It appears from the first pictures that there is no life on Mars: not life in the sense of someone like a person walking about it. But one has to consider that, if a spaceship landed on Earth, and showed pictures only of Rockefeller, we might not recognize it as life.)

Why is it that the liberal Republican is so spineless? There is a deep connection between political character (the way in which a man conducts himself as a politician) and political principle. When one runs down the names of the liberal Republicans of the past half-century, the question whether they are (or have been) anything is inextricably mixed with the question whether they believe (or have believed) anything. Perhaps they are such feeble standard-bearers of their party because they do not believe, passionately or determinedly, that it is necessary for their party to be in power, and perhaps they lack this conviction because *on the whole* they are not dissatisfied with the Democratic regimes.

After all, the Democratic party has long since made its treaty, even if not quite its peace, with business, even with big business, even with the "economic royalists" whom Roosevelt so belabored, but did not dethrone. Moreover, it is not private enterprise, in any true sense, which the business interests of which the liberal Republicans are the spokesmen now seek to defend, but an alliance between big business and the federal government, which the Democrats since World War II have been quite as willing to conclude as the Republicans. Why should a Rockefeller think it really matters for the Republicans to regain the White House, except so that he may live there? And as at least his own career shows, that is not by itself enough of a spark to start a dynamo. It is exactly a dynamo—a machine for converting mechanical energy into electrical energy—which no liberal Republican seems to have been able to provide for his party for 50 years and more.

But behind these questions lies a larger one: whether not only the liberal Republicans, but the conservative

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Republicans as well, in fact "believe" in politics; whether they allow to politics a preeminence (even if only in the last resort) over the other ways of social action by which a nation governs itself. Perhaps one cannot "feel" the Republican party because it is not really a political party, but a kind of loose federation which now and then acts in ways, and to ends, which are only quasi-political. If one really cares about politics, one has more affection for one's party than the Republicans have shown in most of this century, and nourishes it better. One often gets the impression that they do not really know what their party is *for*.

One of the most deadly criticisms of the conservative against the liberal Republican in the past 50 years is that he is content that the Republicans should be a kind of "loyal opposition" to the Democratic party, except when the Democrats allow their own claim to govern to go by default. But the criticism can be turned against the conservatives themselves. For it is hard to understand why, since they do not really believe in either the need for, or efficacy of, political action, they want to get back to power at all, unless it is to preside, like upside-down Marxists, over the withering away of the state, and therefore of politics, and of the need for politics, and of any function for themselves.

Those are the mysteries we have to explore.

## A People in Limbo

# South Africa's Coloureds

## by Benjamin Pogrund

On the day that the violence and deaths reached their peak in South Africa's racial upheaval in June, the report of a government commission of inquiry into the country's Coloureds was tabled in parliament. Because of what was happening at the time, the significance of the report has been missed; so too has the significance of the government's negative response to it. Both go to the heart of South Africa's racial situation. The commission—overwhelmingly dominated by government supporters and adherents—produced a report of startling dimensions, urging the wholesale ending of apartheid against the Coloureds. In rejecting the report, the government has again made it abundantly clear that it is not prepared to deviate from the basics of its racial ideology.

The two and one-half million Coloureds are nine percent of the population. They are the product of unions between white colonists and indigenous blacks and black slaves imported from the East Indies in the 18th Century. (From time to time there are attempts to deny that Afrikaner loins had anything to do with it.) In skin color they range from pure "white" through shades of brown to very black.

The Coloureds sit uneasily between the whites and the black Africans. While subject to the racial discrimination the blacks suffer, the Coloureds are less deprived. Some among them plead for acceptance by the whites, and have continued to do so despite repeated rebuff. Two decades ago, they were stripped of their right to vote for parliament. Others increasingly see the community's future in terms of an all-black alliance. The home language of most Coloureds is that of the white Afrikaners who control the country; among black Africans, it was resentment of the enforced study of this language at schools that triggered the June explosion. Such is Coloured kinship with the Afrikaners that they are often termed "bruin Afrikaners"—brown Afrikaners. Summing up their position, they have also been called God's stepchildren.

Even while the Afrikaners have rejected and debased the Coloureds, in recent years there has been division about the correctness of the government's approach. This has been accentuated by the lack of any meaningful official policy about the Coloureds. For black Africans there is the Grand Design of separate development, with what are described as "separate freedoms" in separate Bantustan areas. For Coloureds (and also for the 750,000 Indians) there is parallel development. That means there is no "homeland" for them; the best that has been devised yet is a restricted, effectively meaningless, say in the administration of their affairs and a Coloured Representative Council, a consultative-type body whose regular decisions op-

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posing apartheid are as regularly ignored. Prime Minister John Vorster has even publicly acknowledged the lack of policy by stating that it will be up to future generations to resolve the question of the Coloureds. *What it comes down to is that they are a people in limbo.*

Three years ago, reacting to pressure inside Afrikaner ranks and developing anger among Coloureds, the government set up a commission of inquiry charged with carrying out a thorough investigation into the position of the Coloureds. It was evident at the time that the government's hope was that the commission would produce a policy for the future that could be adopted.

The commission was given a membership rare in South Africa: it was interracial, with a majority of whites but with a substantial Coloured presence. This in itself gave its operations and possible findings unusual interest. Although all 19 members, with only one exception, could be said to be committed to government racial policy in one way or another, representation within this limitation was quite broadly based. "Liberal" Afrikaner academic and business views were strongly present. The chairman, Professor Erika Theron, from whom the commission took its name, is a professor of social work at the University of Stellenbosch, the oldest and most prestigious of the Afrikaans universities. On the Coloured side, all the members were people taking part in apartheid institutions, but some did so out of despair rather than conviction.

Gradually, word began to leak out that the commission was likely to come up with a surprising and controversial report. Official anxiety mounted, and there appear to have been attempts to delay the release of the report. Government leaders prepared for the worst, making careful public statements stressing that whatever the report said it would be merely another view and not the definitive work on the issue.

The report, when completed, justified the government's fears, for it was a shattering indictment of many established racist policies and practices. The condemnation has gained in strength because in several key areas the commission members confirmed their adherence to orthodox apartheid policy, calling only for changes to make it less unjust and less resented by Coloureds. The report is of special value to outsiders in giving practical illustration of the workings of apartheid.

As its base point, the commission damned the existing form of Coloured representation and noted that most Coloureds opposed separate development. It recommended that the government urgently consider a number of "drastic constitutional changes" for the Coloureds. Although it avoided details, by implication the commission called for direct Coloured representation in parliament and every other level of government.

From then on, the commission moved through a total of 178 recommendations reaching into every possible aspect of Coloured existence and discrimination. Many of the findings were by majority vote; white and Coloured views frequently coincided.

Attacking another cornerstone of apartheid, the commission said that the prohibitions on interrace marriage and interrace sex should be scrapped. It had become deeply aware, it said, of the serious moral and religious objections to the prohibitions. The commission furthermore recommended the total repeal of all statutory bars on the employment of Coloureds. The reservation of jobs for "whites only" should be ended. It said that trade unions should be allowed to have common white and Coloured membership. Now, such unions can exist, and can also have black African members; but racially mixed trade unions are denied recognition in law and have trouble taking part in normal conciliation machinery, apart from their problems in receiving Security Police attention. The racial discrepancy in salaries should be ended, and there should be equal opportunities for advancement. Currently Coloured doctors, nurses and teachers in government employ get less pay than equally qualified whites; black Africans are paid at still lower levels.

The commission urged too that the longstanding "tot" system for Coloured farm laborers be reduced. This is the practice whereby workers are given a daily allocation of cheap, raw wine, to some extent in lieu of wages. It has resulted in widespread alcoholism.

The commission said that all universities should be opened to Coloured students. This contradicts government policy that since 1959 has insisted on racially separate universities, with Coloureds having their own ethnic institutions and with separate ones also for different black African tribal groups. In addition, private schools should be allowed to admit Coloureds "without interference." Until now, occasional efforts by some church schools to accept Coloured pupils have been blocked by the government. Professional, trade, business, scientific and other organizations should also be allowed to decide for themselves whether or not to admit Coloured members.

In sports, which are very big in South Africa and where the government permits only limited interracial contact, the commission found that all Coloured sports officials wanted full participation with whites at all levels. Unnecessary prohibitions on contact should be removed, said the commission, and athletic bodies and clubs should be able to decide for themselves what they wanted to do.

In those areas where the commission did not challenge apartheid it still urged changes. It did not question "population classification," the system of pigeonholing every South African into a defined racial category and without which the elaborate apartheid system would be impossible. But in treating of what must be a sickening issue to the world at large, akin to the infamous Nuremberg Laws, the commission urged different rules to make social acceptance and family

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descent the criteria for deciding a person's racial group. Through this the commission was seeking to ameliorate the agony of "borderline" Coloureds who fall between the white or black African groups. It was also concerned about the existing subdivision of the Coloured group into "Cape Coloured," "Malay," "Griqua" and "Other," and suggested instead only a single Coloured ethnic grouping.

On Group Areas—the total zoning of South Africa into separate residential and business areas for different races—the commission again did not challenge the principle. But it found "widespread and intense opposition among the vast majority of Coloureds" to the system and recommended fewer removals of people. Until now, tens of thousands of Coloureds (and incidentally, even greater numbers of black Africans) have had to leave their homes. That's happened to only a relative handful of whites. The commission specifically recommended that Coloureds be left to occupy District Six, a highly desirable part of Cape Town from which they are currently being evicted for resettlement far from the city.

While the principle of segregated housing was not questioned either, the commission strongly criticized the acute shortage of housing for Coloureds. While it accepted segregated transport, it criticized the lack of transport facilities for Coloureds. And while it would tolerate segregated schooling, it called for more money to be spent on educating Coloureds.

Even allowing for what the commission did not challenge, if its many recommendations of change were to be implemented it would mean a new society in South Africa. There is certainly no doubt that the main thrust of the commission's effort was to extend equality of treatment and opportunity to Coloureds, and thus to bring them into the midst of whites. What it came down to was a call for a return, in many vital respects, to the white-Coloured relationships of 28 years ago before the Afrikaners took over the government and began to push through law after law deepening and formalizing racial divisions.

And even though the commission meant to have rights extended only to Coloureds, and to no other blacks, it is evident that a process of change, once started, would inevitably affect blacks. Apartheid relies for its strength on the totality of its application; once erosion starts the entire structure starts to collapse. It is no doubt because of this that the South African government was quick to reject the commission's main findings. A White Paper issued simultaneously with the commission report said the government could not commit itself to standpoints that would return the country to "a situation of political exploitation and conflicting group interests"; the government said it was convinced that recommendations that would break down the recognition and development of the identity of the various population groups "are not conducive to the orderly and evolutionary advancement of the various population groups in the Republic [of South Africa] as a whole."

Translated, what the jargon means is that it is unthinkable to get rid of apartheid, whether it's called that or "separate development" or "parallel development." Now to be faced is the still greater frustration and bitterness of Coloureds over their white-ordained lot in life.

# A Letter From Mrs. Gandhi's India

## by Azad

*New Delhi*

On June 26, 1975, Indira Gandhi, using as an argument that the opposition had plans to overthrow the government, declared an emergency in India and arrested an estimated 100,000 citizens during the next few months. In later speeches she and other government spokesmen also insisted that the opposition was receiving money and help from abroad for its plans. She did not produce any evidence for her accusation, and no one accused of the monstrous charge of conspiracy has been produced in court to answer it.

According to the prime minister, the chief "conspirator" is Jayaprakash Narayan, for whom nonviolence, in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi, is an

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article of faith. Jayaprakash, aged 73, was released November 16, presumably because of his suddenly and dramatically deteriorating health in detention. Only the restoration of a free society in India will uncover the reason why he came so close to death in the hands of government doctors and in the care of India's two premier medical institutions, both government-owned, the All-India Medical Institute at Delhi and the Post-Graduate Medical Institute at Chandigarh. Now, cared for by private doctors in Bombay, he has made a partial recovery though the damage to his kidneys is permanent and he will never be normally active again. Another "conspirator" is Morarji Desai, also an apostle of nonviolence. Aged 81, he is still in detention. Significantly, he has refused to eat any cooked food in jail, except what is, on occasion, provided by his family. These are perhaps the last two living Gandhian leaders of national stature now left in India. They did, it is true, wish most emphatically to replace Mrs. Gandhi's government, believing that in a democratic system governments are and should be replaced when they fail to fulfill their mandate or when they transgress the limits of decent and democratic functioning.

Mrs. Gandhi's government had clearly failed to fulfill the enthusiastic mandate it had received in 1971—a disappointment Indians could have lived with had her government not also come to represent and shield growing corruption in its own ranks, and a vulgar and arrogant use of power that made a mockery of democratic procedures and the decencies of life. Her own insensitivity to the rising resentment against such behavior and her refusal to consider specific charges brought in Parliament against ministers known to be corrupt, *e.g.*, Bansi Lal (now defense minister) and L.N. Mishra (former railway minister, killed by a bomb explosion in early 1975) went far to aggravate conditions of severe economic distress. In 1974 a popular movement against her government took shape and a perennially divided opposition began to come together under Jayaprakash Narayan to discuss such issues as the erosion of citizens' rights, corruption that included the manner of collection and use of money by the Congress, and the need for electoral and educational reform—all of which had assumed grave national proportions. The demand that she should cleanse the Congress and take action against the corrupt began to be heard within her own party. It became obvious that there was a growing caucus within the Congress dissatisfied with her leadership, and who did not believe she had a divine right to rule.

When Mrs. Gandhi declared an emergency, she acted in character. Having become increasingly authoritarian over the past six years she finally took the plunge. Three events seem to have precipitated the decision. The election in Gujerat State in early June 1975 revealed that a united opposition could get the better of the Congress. With the general election due less than a year away, this was an ominous sign. On June 12th the Allahabad High Court judgment found her guilty of corruption on two counts in the conduct of her election to Parliament in 1971. The judge's courage caused a stir; his judgment did not. Her ambiguous and evasive statements in court, reported in detail in the newspapers, had left the public with the definite impression that she had been neither straightforward nor truthful. Her agent, Yashpal Kapoor, a highly controversial political figure, had made matters worse for her by his own brash statements in court. But above all, her own party seemed to be coming to the boil, alerting her to a possible move to replace her. Among those spearheading a dialogue with Jayaprakash Narayan and opposition parties, were the brilliant young radicals, Chandrashekhar, Mohan Dharia and Krishna Kant, who had in 1969 helped to engineer a split in the Congress, outwit the Old Guard and raise her to unrivaled leadership. Their brains, influence and backing could not be underestimated. After the Allahabad judgment, a group of congressmen openly urged her to step down pending the Supreme Court's decision on her appeal, in the interests of democratic functioning. When it became clear to her that she would not be allowed to appoint a substitute of her own choice to take her place, who would fade out in her favor later, she realized she was in real danger of not getting her position back.

The emergency paid immediate dividends. A sweep of arrests in the night had the advantage of surprise attack. Censorship immobilized the press. It also covered the country with an unnatural blanket of silence, for nobody knew what was going on. Criticism, oral or written, of the government, was forbidden. More than five people could not congregate without special permission. Permission was freely given to "spontaneous demonstrations" in support of the prime minister. And the flash and flourish of naked power left her party in no doubt about how far the leader was willing to go to keep herself in the saddle. Those still out of jail who had shown signs of rebellion had second thoughts. Armed guards were put on duty on the houses of cabinet ministers, ostensibly for their protection.

Once it was launched, the dictatorship was easy to perpetuate. The last few years had prepared the ground, providing her with a "committed" civil service which understood that it would not be tolerated unless obedience and loyalty to the prime minister were its first concerns; a police force built up to match the army

**SUMMER SCHEDULE:**

we will omit an issue

on August 14 (next week)

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in numbers, and in sophisticated weaponry and intelligence devices; a system of surveillance by which she kept her ministers and party members in line by the dossiers in her possession. Few of these instruments, except police control, were necessary in the countryside where the people were largely unlettered. But they were necessary in the cities.

Delegations of traders, teachers, students, workers, writers, businessmen and trade unionists were ordered to appear at her residence to congratulate her on the emergency and offer support to her "Twenty Point Program." Huge posters hailing her leadership, along with pictures of her in every shop window, burgeoned overnight. Anxious to overcome the charge in her own party and the general public of the Communist influence on her, she put a deliberate distance between herself and the Moscow-directed Communist party of India, her chief ally. She could afford to do so as she had Moscow's unqualified support. The CPI was obliged to go along with her, whatever its private thoughts about her new moves. These were headed by putting her much advertised "radicalism" into cold storage with concessions to industry, the withdrawal of a fixed bonus to workers her government had announced three years earlier, and a budget that cheered and mollified the rich. Her son, Sanjay, who had failed to produce an indigenous car for which he had been granted an exclusive government licence in 1970, generous support from industrial backers, and 290 acres of requisitioned land—and whose failure had become one of the now buried scandals of her regime—was projected as a "youth leader" and pragmatist, proof that the Congress was not committed to any particular ideology, only to progress. Sanjay was also projected as Mrs. Gandhi's political heir, setting the dynastic seal on her dictatorial coup, and setting at rest any speculation about who would succeed her. The Congress has thus been reduced to Mrs. Gandhi's personal possession to pass on, and India a classic example of Asian dictatorship.

In these circumstances, the question often put to her, of when she plans to lift the emergency, has become irrelevant, for lifting it will make little difference to India. Mrs. Gandhi has used her opportunity since June 26th last year to end all legitimate and constitutional challenge to her personal rule and to cripple the institutions through which that challenge could come. This has been done under constitutional cover. Parliament met from July 21 to August 7, 1975 to crucially amend the constitution and sanction—as the law of the land—the violations of civil liberties. Some 30 MPs were in jail—opposition leaders (except those of the CPI) and those belonging to her own party who she feared were going to lead a confrontation against her.

The censors in New Delhi and the state capitals whose job it is to black out news and opinions inconvenient to the government—and they cover the whole territory of newspapers, magazines, commentary, fiction, theater and films—may be dispensed with once the emergency is lifted, but control of all media will continue. Radio and television are a government monopoly in any case, and in the past Mrs. Gandhi has used them blatantly to promote herself and her party and distort happenings in India. Now a single news

*"Probably no relation. . . ."*

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agency, Samachar, feeds the press with official handouts. Respected editors have been thrown out of their jobs and replaced by sycophants, and newspaper management, already government-manipulated, will soon be its complete tool in what the minister for information and broadcasting picturesquely describes as "re-structuring the entire newspaper industry so as to make it accountable to the people." In today's official jargon this means government's iron hand. This week two of the last dissident voices were silenced. A one-man weekly, *Opinion*, was simply shut down; a tiny circulation monthly read mostly by intellectuals, *Seminars*, put itself out of business rather than submit its pages to the censors. The power of the censors is reflected in the fact that, as of this writing, not one of the supine Indian press has reported the untimely death of these periodicals.

A new law was passed last August making election disputes relating to the president, the vice president, prime minister and speaker nonjusticiable. And the Representation of Peoples Act was amended retroactively in order to legalize the very issues on which the prime minister had been indicted in her election case—an extraordinarily brazen piece of legislation since her case was already pending in the Supreme Court. Thus any genuine judgment by the Court was nullified in advance. With no legal scope left to operate in, it was obliged to exonerate her. The lesson of those who rebel foreclosed other options.

Even if the emergency is lifted opposition parties will take long to recover from the bludgeoning authoritarian rule has given them. Thousands of their political workers are in jail and a relentless campaign to discredit them as enemies of the people is carried on by the government in circumstances where they are not free to answer charges or be reported in the press. They would find themselves severely damaged in human resources and in funds if an election were announced, and without the full restoration of press freedom and civil liberties there can be no free and fair election. No one expects one either.

After the political opposition, Mrs. Gandhi's main target has been the universities. Delhi and Nehru universities, both in the capital, and among the country's most prestigious institutions, have been subjected to searches and arrests. At one time, soon after the emergency was proclaimed, nearly the whole Sanskrit department of Delhi university was in jail, a warning to those who had Jan Sangh (Right) affiliations or sympathies. But followers of the Communist party-Marxist, which is bitterly opposed to the regime, have not fared much better. People with a living to earn and families to feed will think twice before openly dissenting.

Lifting the emergency will leave intact the vast police force, as big as the army and inflated with powers. Law and order is a state subject but the Border Security Force, used for defense, is far better armed than the normal police force, and has been freely used along with the powerful Central Reserve Police against citizens. The government showed its police might and muscle when it arbitrarily dismissed Tamil Nad's opposition government on January 31st, instead of holding the state election due at the time, or postponing it for the duration of the emergency as the general election has been postponed.

Censorship has been the most highly effective instrument of India's dictatorship, keeping people in ignorance about an event in another town or even half a mile away in their own town. The enormity of censorship, we now know, can never be understood by people in countries where information is freely available, where there is a continuous flow of news, and where views of all kinds can be freely expressed. Indians today are in ignorance about what is happening in India and only those world events reach them that the censors pass as suitable for consumption. Very few people heard about the nonviolent protest begun in Delhi and four states (U.P., Bihar, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh) on November 14th, Jawaharlal Nehru's birthday, and concluded on January 26th, Republic Day, though it daily offered up batches of peaceful protestors to the police and was led by citizens as eminent as Maniben Patel, Sardar Patel's daughter. Several jailbreaks, major news items in ordinary times, were not permitted to be reported at all. News about them traveled by grapevine. But one has learned to read between the lines of newspaper accounts. This does not take much ingenuity since our leaders have become drearily repetitive and the current jargon they use provides definite clues to their statements. Reference to "rightist fascist forces re-grouping" means the opposition is refusing to surrender or be wiped out. One positive result of the emergency, in fact, has been to bring a divided opposition closer together and to blur the barriers between left, right and center. As in British times, the issue is freedom. When senior officials meet in Delhi to discuss stricter security measures along with the transfer and dismissal of jail staff and officers, the perceptive reader realizes the jailbreak accounts he has heard must be substantially true.

In April the family planning drive, an objective with which there is widespread agreement among the educated, made inadvertent news when bungling and bullying tactics misfired, leading to an angry demonstration at Turkman Gate, a predominantly Muslim locality in Old Delhi. This was not, of course, reported in the newspapers, though the crowd turned violent, leading to a riot, with 30 or more people killed and hundreds arrested. But the news was too explosive to be contained and word of it spread fast. Earlier the Delhi administration had announced that anyone expecting a third child would not get a ration card; government-employed teachers would have to get five people sterilized if they wanted to keep their jobs; no

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one due a government house allotment would get it till he produced a sterilization certificate; and vans had rounded up young and old, married and unmarried for "the operation." The fury at Turkman Gate had been in response to forcible evictions of its inhabitants from the area along with the administration's family planning methods. That there must be some truth in the news of deaths and arrests on a considerable scale became evident when about a week after the event an array of spokesmen swung into identical explanation like an orchestra with everybody playing the violin. The lieutenant governor of Delhi denied that people were being forcibly sterilized. The health minister hastened to make it clear in Parliament that the union government "was not for pressure or harrassment in implementing the program" and was ruling out compulsory sterilization for the parents of more than two children. A team of reporters sent to "investigate allegations of forcible sterilization found them "entirely false." And a government release stated in predictable language that "certain unsocial and frustrated elements were circulating rumours that rations would not be issued nor salaries paid to persons not undergoing sterilization." It warned the people to be on guard against "such anti-national and anti-social elements and their nefarious designs." None of this vehement denial explained why the new family planning center set up with much fanfare at Dojana House, Old Delhi, had abruptly been shut down, nor the flood of resentment that continued to fill the air. But this unceremonious retreat on an issue where the Catholics had already expressed firm disapproval, and the Muslims had flared into actual violence, is an interesting aspect of maneuver required even in a dictatorship. Modifying Delhi's rough sterilization drive is probably based on an assessment that the subject is inflammable and the Muslims must be handled with care. But in our irrational political situation it could simply be based on the possibility of a third expected child for Mrs. Gandhi's elder son. In any event it would be a tragedy if the campaign is not soon converted to education and effective remedy, for on this issue, emergency or no emergency, we cannot afford to fail.

## Our Grandchildren Will Pay

# In Hock to Pensions

## by Tom Stevenson

In June the House voted to increase the nation's debt limit from $627 billion to $700 billion. A more punctilious Congress might have increased that figure to over one trillion dollars. Why? A conservative estimate of $300 billion is the staggering sum that the federal government is presently in hock to its legions of current and retired employees under one of a dozen pension programs. In 1970, this "accrued unfunded liability," the phrase accountants and actuaries use to denote the amount of dollars a pension fund is shy of its commitments, was about $158 billion. Today, the figure for the military, alone, has grown to $172.2 billion. When the liabilities of the civil service ($106.8 billion), Coast Guard ($2.1 billion), District of Columbia police and fire departments ($1.1 billion), foreign service ($950 million), Central Intelligence Agency (although secret, perhaps one billion dollars), Federal Judiciary ($28 million), Public Health Service ($624 million), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ($26 million), Federal Lighthouse Keepers (seven million dollars) and other special plans such as the US Presidents Retirement System are included, the total debt of federal employee pension funds now stands at $285 billion.

That figure, however, almost certainly understates the government's total pension obligations. For if one adds the unfunded liabilities of the various veterans' pension programs ($110 billion) and the railroad retirement system ($22 billion) which, although not federal employee funds, constitute a similar financial commitment, and another $75 billion for the amount by which some actuaries believe that the government may be underestimating its liabilities, the total obligations now approach $500 billion. And that doesn't count Social Security, which is not, strictly

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speaking, a pension system.

Spurred mainly by the revelations concerning New York's pensions, the costly benefits and questionable financing of state and local government pension plans have become a favorite target of the Ford administration. Yet scant attention has been paid to the spiraling obligations of the pensions that the federal lawmakers, bureaucrats and military have devised for themselves. One wades in vain through the 384-page *1977 Budget of the United States Government* and the companion 313-page *Special Analyses of the 1977 Budget* for a single mention of this looming burden. "Frankly, we would just as soon not receive any publicity," says an official of the US Federal Judiciary System. There may be some good reasons that some federal employees would prefer to keep their retirement systems out of the spotlight.

In contrast to private employers, who typically require an employee to reach 65 before receiving full retirement benefits, many civil service employees can retire as early as age 55, which means that they will live off pension benefits for twice as long. "This is very costly," says Robert Myers, a former chief actuary of the Social Security system and now a professor of actuarial science at Temple University. "The country couldn't afford to do this for other employees. There is no economic justification for doing it for government workers."

To take advantage of the age-55 provision, a federal worker must have put in 30 years. But—again in contrast to the private sector—those years include military service. This provision alone cost the government $400 million in fiscal 1976.

Since civil service workers are not members of the Social Security system, they escape paying the 5.85 percent of salary tax (up to a current maximum of nearly $1000) that most private employees must pay. Yet by holding part-time or private jobs once they quit the government, 40 percent qualify for Social Security benefits. What makes this practice questionable is that Social Security benefits are intentionally tilted so that low-wage earners receive a higher rate of return on their contribution than the middle class. But since only the private, not the total, earnings of the civil service employee are included in the benefit formula, they qualify for the more generous return. "This is a ripoff," says an actuary at a major New York insurance company. "These are largely middle class families taking advantage of a benefit formula that was designed for the poor."

In most private pension plans, a disability retirement, which allows a $5200 a year tax credit, is only permitted when an employee is unable to perform *any* job. In the federal government, a disability retirement is permitted if the employee cannot perform his *current* job. Consequently, a warehouse worker with a bad back can retire on disability rather than be transferred to a clerical job. Today, disability retirements in the civil service are approximately 50 percent higher than in most other systems, and the percentage is growing. "It is outrageous," says Myers. "I know people who have retired for disability who I don't think are disabled at all."

Some federal employees get specially advantageous breaks. For example, while most civil service workers receive retirement benefits of 56 percent of their salary for 30 years of service, congressmen and congressional aides get 75 percent. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Secret Service and other "hazardous duty" personnel can retire at age 50, often at 50 percent or more of their salary. Foreign Service personnel, who can also retire at age 50, may receive in addition special retirement credits for service in one of the overseas State Department posts that are designated "hazardous" or "unhealthful." "The Foreign Service is even worse than the civil service as far as early retirement is concerned," says Myers. "I have been abroad a lot. While a few of these people have tough assignments, most live real well."

Despite the fact that a growing proportion of military assignments involve running computers, staffing hospitals, image-polishing and other sedentary chores, the military offers the most generous retirement package of all. After 20 years, when the typical officer or enlisted person is in his or her early 40s, he or she can retire at 50 percent of basic salary; after 30 years the retiree gets 75 percent. This means that the typical military careerist who retires around age 45 will normally receive retirement benefits amounting to more than twice the total basic pay received during active duty.

Further, nothing prevents military retirees from collecting up to three government pensions: military, Social Security (unlike the civil service, military personnel are members of the system) and, if they can land another government job, civil service. The National Taxpayers Union, the most vocal critic of this so-called "double-dipping," estimates that there are presently 100,000 military retirees holding civil service positions—some of which, the Union claims, are identical to their former military responsibilities.

The most costly feature of federal retirement programs is that, unlike virtually all private pensions, benefit levels are pegged to the cost of living. In essence, this means that each time the consumer price index goes up one percent, so do pension benefits. A lieutenant colonel, for example, who retires at age 44 can expect to receive total retirement benefits of $368,222 over the remaining three decades of his life, assuming no inflation. However with six percent inflation, he will get nearly three times as much: $985,011. With some 2.5 million retirees now receiving $15 billion a year in retirement checks, a six percent increase in inflation triggers a $950 million annual jump in costs.

Further, this ignores the impact of the controversial

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"kicker." Every time the cost of living goes up three percent, federal retirees receive a four percent boost in their retirement benefits. Thus, while inflation has gone up 56 percent since 1969, pensions have risen 72 percent, giving federal workers a stake in continued inflation.

Have the costs of federal pensions gone out of control? The Pentagon expresses increasing concern over its retirement costs and has proposed cutting the pension benefits of retirees with less than 30 years of service by 15 percent. Its concern appears well founded. In 1961, retirement pay was only 1.7 percent ($758 million) of the Defense Department's total expenditures ($44.6 billion). In fiscal 1976, while total expenditures have roughly doubled to $91.3 billion, retirement costs have soared to $7.3 billion, or eight percent of total expenditures.

The Civil Service Commission concluded in a 1974 study of 25 corporate, state and city pensions that while civil service retirement benefits were more generous than 10 of the plans ranked, they were comparable to those offered by all the other employers such as California, Maryland, Bank of America, IBM and US Steel. (The only plan ranked more liberal was New York State's.) But that is about the extent of the commission's evaluations. "It is tough to compare benefits," says Thomas Tinsley, who heads the commission's retirement system. "Those studies were done only to look at particular benefits, not at their costs." However in 1975 three independent outside actuaries, who by law must periodically evaluate the plan, warned that "the present approach to funding the system will lead to spiraling costs in the future."

So far, however, neither Congress nor the administration has taken any legislative action on either the Pentagon proposal nor the actuaries' report. Arch Patton, retired director of the McKinsey & Co. consulting firm, former chairman of the Presidential Commission on Executive, Legislative and Judicial Salaries, is apprehensive about this indifference. "I think that the federal government's problems with pensions are as bad as New York City's—or worse," says Patton. "Unless something is done it is going to get out of hand. And I'm not sure that it is not already out of hand."

The prospects for a far-ranging congressional review of federal pension systems seem remote. The arcane nature of pensions, the conflict of interest inherent in Congress reforming its own system, the pressure from well organized retirees, and fragmented congressional control combine to make the chances of a thorough reappraisal small.

Perhaps the main reason an overhaul is unlikely—and this is also the most disquieting characteristic of federal pension funds—lies in the strange way they are financed. Instead of putting aside sufficient money each year to meet future pension obligations, as private corporations are required to do under the 1974 Pension Reform Act, the federal government only partially funds its plans. (The sole exception is the Federal Reserve System which is fully funded.) In the case of the military, the Coast Guard, Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration retirement plans, the government maintains no special pension fund at all. The full $7.3 billion spent on military pensions in 1976 was distributed directly to one million retirees. No money was set aside to pay the costs of the future pensions of 2.1 million current military personnel.

The federal government, then, is only now paying off the full manpower costs of the last three decades. But it is sticking future taxpayers with the bill for today's five million bureaucrats and military personnel. What Washington, DC, is doing is little different from what Treasury Secretary William Simon and other federal officials have criticized New York for doing: using debt to finance current operating costs. Unfunded pension liabilities are, of course, a special kind of financial obligation. But, in economic terms, they are little different from conventional borrowing.

The government's reluctance to face up to this looming obligation, while hardly praiseworthy, is entirely understandable. Right now the cost of the federal pension system is about $15 billion a year. However, according to estimates by independent actuaries and the General Accounting Office, it would cost a total of about $40 billion a year to fund both systems under the same standards set for private industry by the Pension Reform Act. Raising that extra $25 billion a year is a possibility few legislators would even contemplate, much less propose. It's far easier to leave it to their successors.

To be sure, there are unique problems in funding a federal pension system. With the exception of the Federal Reserve plan, federal agencies aren't permitted to purchase corporate stocks or bonds; they can only own US Treasury issues. Congress could therefore "fund" the systems by creating an additional $300 billion or so of Treasury bonds and transferring them to special pension funds. But this would have no real economic effect: one federal liability would merely have been exchanged for another. The only way to transfer the costs of pensions to the current generation is to require taxpayers or employees to pay for them today, an unpalatable alternative for most elected officials. However, issuing new debt would make federal pension liabilities more visible and underscore their growing importance.

A decade ago, liberal pension benefits were probably a necessary compensation for the inadequacy of federal wages, which lagged far behind private wages. In the last decade, however, the salary gap has been completely closed. With federal liabilities mounting by billions of dollars each year, the generous benefits and growing costs of federal pensions need reappraisal.

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## Arts and Lives

# Stanley Kauffmann on films

## Pleasantries, Mostly

*Le Magnifique* (Cine III). Philippe de Broca is no longer a name to conjure with, which is something of a pity because he's still something of a conjuror. In the early days of the New Wave he was a protégé of Claude Chabrol. He was the one lighthearted member of the Wave: his gifts ran to gaiety updated rather than to his colleagues' usual concerns with esthetic revisionism and social surgery. He once made a film, *The Love Game*, on an idea by Geneviève Cluny that Godard later remade as *Une Femme est une Femme*, and I preferred de Broca's version. His films *The Joker* and *The Five-day Lover*, both with Jean-Pierre Cassel, had effervescent expertise. But the trouble with lightheartedness is life: not the fact that it contains at least as much grimness as brightness but that one gets older and lightheartedness is directly connected to superabundant energy. De Broca's last really successful film that I know was *That Man from Rio* (1964), with Jean-Paul Belmondo, which was his biggest hit in the US, although *King of Hearts*, a lesser piece, ran for five years in Boston.

Twelve years ago I had a little talk with de Broca in Paris, in which he said that, before he had begun making films, he went to a play, saw a young actor named Jean-Pierre Cassel, and thought: "If ever I can make my own films, I'm going to use him." A few weeks later he went to see the play again; Cassel had been replaced by a young actor named Jean-Paul Belmondo, and de Broca thought: "If ever I can make my own films, I'm going to use *him*, too."

It's Belmondo in this new one. A good thing, too. Because it's Belmondo—charm and talent—and Jacqueline Bisset—charm, talent and startling beauty—who make this picture pleasant. The script is by de Broca, and its idea is so tired that my fingers figuratively yawn as I start to sketch it: a hack writer (of James Bond-type novels) falls in love with the girl upstairs in his Paris apartment house. Interwoven with their story are visualized episodes from the wild espionage novel that the hero is writing—himself as super hero, the girl as glamor spy—and the fantasies are influenced by the progress of the real-life affair.

But my fingers brighten up again to talk about Belmondo and Bisset. He is no longer a youth—he calls himself 40 in the film—but he is still lean, strong, homely-handsome, humorous, very taking and (which is usually omitted) technically precise. As for Bisset, it's been clear ever since *The Grasshopper* that she's one of the true beauties on the screen today, clearer still from *Day for Night* that she has talent, and now clear that she can be wickedly, disarmingly cute.

That last point points at de Broca. No one is ever going to single out *Le Magnifique* as a paragon of film comedy, but de Broca is a genuine comedian and he knows how to evoke the best of whatever is comic in his actors. Bisset owed much to Truffaut in a very different role in *Day for Night*. In this inferior film she perhaps owes even more to de Broca. As for Belmondo he presumably *knows* what he owes this director, which is why, at this stage of his career, he accepted a script like this. De Broca helps him make something of his part that is enjoyable exactly as long as the picture lasts, if not a split-second longer.

As for de Broca's shooting and editing, his edge is not as keen as it once was and he relies overmuch on parodic reference (*La Dolce Vita*, *8½*, *Le Million*, *The Gold Rush*), but de Broca slightly dulled is a great deal keener than the people who directed *Murder by Death* and *The Big Bus*, for instance. *Le Magnifique* is not a film that absolutely had to be made or must absolutely be seen: but having been made, it's enjoyable. Particularly for the fun of spending 90 minutes with the principals.

*The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings* (Universal). Here is another flyweight picture which is still considerable fun—about the black baseball players of the pre-Jackie Robinson days. When I was a boy on farms in central New York in the summers of the late 1920s, the men I worked for either played on or were fans of the local baseball team, so I saw a lot of the games. At least once a year a barnstorming team of black players came through (then called Negroes if politeness was in the air). They were marvelous, those Knickerbocker All-Stars. They could do magic with ball and bat and glove. I'm convinced, though I can't prove it, that I once saw Satchel Paige pitch in a converted pasture in Stamford, New York. At any rate, they could and frequently did make monkeys out of the local team.

It was quite clear to everyone, including the Knickerbockers, that the blacks were there to be cheated. Everyone knew, though no one said, that they were very much better than the locals but that one way or another the locals had to win—or, at the most, could be only narrowly beaten. White outfielders would carry extra balls in their back pockets, to throw back in when they couldn't find balls that had been hit into the tall grass. Everyone knew; no one complained. The games were played with one clause of the contract written in invisible ink.

Out of this era a novel was written by William Brashler, and out of the novel an alleged script was written by Hal Barwood and Matthew Robbins. John Badham directed it as well as need be, Bill Butler photographed it a bit better than that. The plot has to do with some players in the Negro League who revolt against their tyrannous Negro owners, form an independent team despite harassment from the owners, are forced out of Negro ball into playing whites, and, as they say, etcetera. There is drama, melodrama, sex and violence, all of it ridiculous. What makes the picture worth seeing is the fun.

That fun focuses on the team itself, on and off the field, with Billy Dee Williams as the star pitcher, and James Earl Jones,

### Films Worth Seeing

*All the President's Men*. How to make a film out of non-filmic material. Anyway it's a *Schadenfreude* treat.

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Jack Nicholson fine in a phony social-political allegory set in a mental hospital.

*Seven Beauties*. Lina Wertmüller's flawed but powerful tragic farce about Italians in WW II.

*Veronique*. A French girl's 13th summer, discovering adults and the adulthood ahead of her. Slender, engaging.

**SK**

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as his catcher and the team slugger, supported by a lot of conscious-character vignette players. On *or* off, the center of the fun is the community of the black men, the black fun *they* have together—the knowledge of their superiority to the people they have to deal with and scrape to, their chuckling tacit freedom, their freemasonry of secret victory. They genuinely enjoy their lives as they bump along. The picture doubtless has its factitious touches on this subject as on others but it must also have its measure of truth, and as presented here it warms us.

*Bingo Long* was shot in Georgia, instead of the Midwest where it's set, presumably because Georgia has some towns that still have a 1930s look. It's a nice album of Americana.

*The Tenant* (Paramount). Like Mayor LaGuardia, when Roman Polanski makes a mistake, it's a beaut. His past includes such beauts as *The Fearless Vampire Killers* and *What?;* his present includes *The Tenant*. It's been clear for some years that one can no longer expect really first-class work from Polanski, but *Macbeth* had its moments and *Rosemary's Baby* and *Chinatown* were good enough in their limited ways. So it's not the drop from *Knife in the Water* that one notes but the drop from his OK recent pictures, from the horrible skills of *Repulsion*, in this latest disaster.

The script (Polanski is co-author) is about a man who rents a Paris apartment last lived in by a girl who committed suicide—in fact, she isn't quite dead when he makes the deal. Possibly a few visitors from Mars will not know immediately that the film must end with the new tenant's suicide, but possibly even Martians will be dissatisfied with Polanski's performance—he plays the title role—with the atrocious dubbing of all the cast except the Americans (Melvyn Douglas and Shelley Winters), with the dialogue which is US hip for the dubbed people, florid and "European" for the English speakers, with the laborious attempts to frighten us which fail because we never care for the hero, never understand why he's succumbing to baleful influences, never understand what those influences are or why they are interested in him. Well, maybe the next Polanski will be up to his good second-rate level.

**Coming**

Ross Terrill on Chairman Mao

# Books Considered

## Lyndon Johnson and The American Dream by Doris Kearns

(Harper and Row; $12.50)

Our Presidents have been powerful leaders of different kinds, but they also have been particular men who have demonstrated weaknesses, vulnerabilities and flaws of character. Doris Kearns tells us, not for the first time, that Lyndon Johnson was a strong, serious, forceful, intelligent, resourceful, discerning political animal who nevertheless could be a frightened, driven, self-doubting and even utterly obsessed person. He was not the first human being to have a complicated, ambiguous nature; nor the first President whose words or manner of behavior told only so much about his outlook or character. Professor Kearns is a Harvard political scientist who wants to offer us some understanding of this rather perplexing and difficult man who achieved so much, and suddenly (by his own account to her) lost so much. She tells us the now fairly well-known story of their meeting: she a White House Fellow in 1967, and also the author of an article in this magazine entitled "How to Remove LBJ in 1968"; he, by then a beleaguered President, quite willing to dance with her at a reception, and let her know almost immediately that her Harvard connection (she was then a graduate student) was not something he could overlook. Eventually he asked her to come help him in Texas upon his retirement. He was planning to write his memoirs, and he wanted someone to go through his various papers with him, talk with him about his achievements and disappointments, prod his memory, respond to his attempts at recollection, at social and political analysis, and not least, at the written, narrative presentation of thoughts and ideas—an exercise that, apparently, very much intimidated that intimidating man.

The professor went to the Texas ranch with the former President, and became, so she tells us in this book, one of his trusted confidantes. (He told her that she reminded him of his mother, but one wonders whether a number of others heard a similar story from the fast-talking Johnson.) In the early morning a sleepless man, obviously aware that death was coming near, sought her out to hear long statements, explanations, avowals, expressions of sadness or regret. She listened, tried to remember what she could, sometimes took notes as he talked, and no doubt wrote down a great deal when he had left. For four years she spent various lengths of time with him and his family, became immersed in his papers, and no doubt began, understandably, to collect her own papers, meant for the book we now have.

He wrote only one of a planned autobiographical trilogy. He had no taste, really, for written self-analysis or display. Kearns' book comes out over three years after his death, at a time when the presidency has been sullied badly and is held suspect by many Americans. She indicates, in her preface, that she is interested in "understanding the interplay between personality and institutions in America." She has obvious credentials for an analysis of the latter part of that "interplay"; her warrant, however, for the judgments she makes about the former President's "psychic structure" is more idiosyn-

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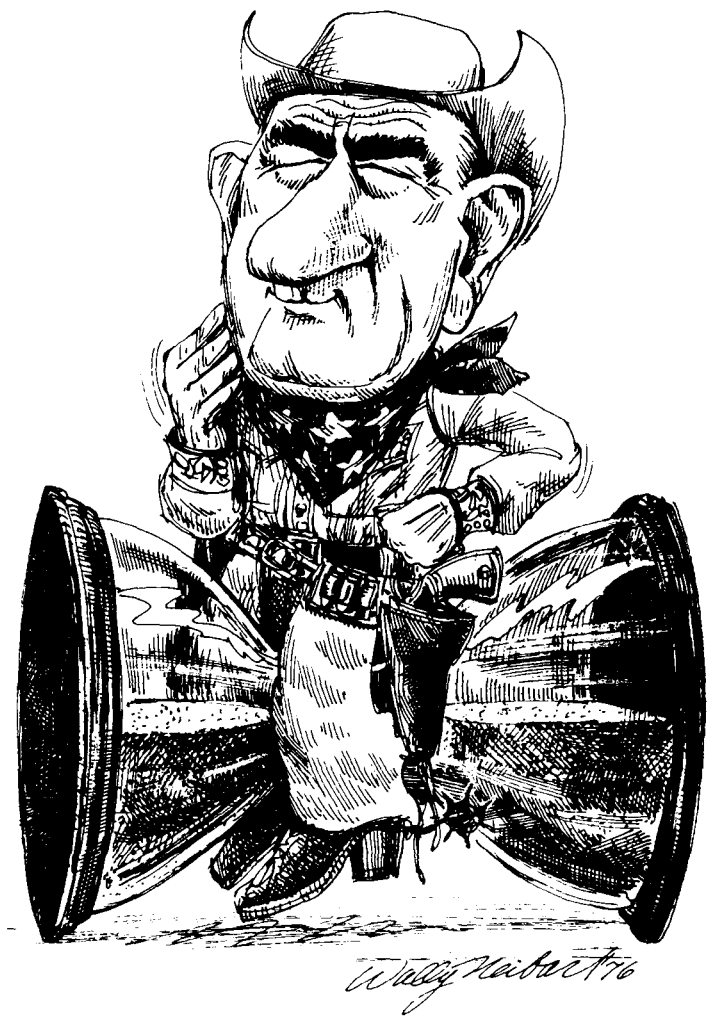
cratic. She herself acknowledges that the nature of her "relationship" to the President ought to be considered by readers who may want to question "the psychological relevance" of her statements. She is intent, after all, even in her more conventional social commentary or political analysis, upon a presentation of "the private man beneath the public figure." She knew that "private man"; she heard him talk and talk. She is no psychiatrist, of course, but she has summoned what she calls "psychiatric knowledge," and has tried to use it "as a means of understanding the formation of Johnson's behavior." Yet, it is hard for anyone to know just how honest and forthcoming the great Texas chameleon was—even at five in the morning, with severe angina pectoris a constant companion.

On the whole Kearns has managed open-eyed restraint. At one point she candidly, pointedly, and eloquently gets to the very heart of things:

*There are mysteries of the human mind that no analytic technique can penetrate—mysteries which, over time, even the greatest psychiatrists, poets, dramatists, and novelists have been unable to explain. There is, for example, no psychiatric principle that can explain Johnson's immense talents, his extraordinary ability to harness his personal needs and direct his strength—tirelessly and with practical intelligence—toward the highest public achievements, or his capacity to sustain a private life whose intimate stability was rare, even among those not subject to the disintegrative pressures of a public career. Indeed, to know fully the disabling conditions of Johnson's youth can only increase admiration for the inexplicable power of his will.*

Inexplicable he remains—a giant of a man at his best, and a gross, pitiable, wrong-headed and utterly untrustworthy one at his worst. The author is right: psychological explanations don't enable us to account for the rise and fall of Lyndon Johnson—a man whose life was especially touched by the fateful incidents and accidents of life, by the web of chance and fateful circumstance that all of us call "life," but that for this particular man became a President's life, hence one we find interesting and instructive. We are told rather a lot, in the first pages of this book, about Johnson's heavy drinking, somewhat coarse and garrulous father—how his behavior contrasted with that of the President's mother, who



was refined, introspective, shy and of an intellectual bent. But the tensions between those two parents do not account for either the man or the President Lyndon Johnson. Many individuals have grown up in troubled homes, in homes dominated by contrasting and conflicted parents, in homes not unlike the kind Johnson knew. He was an especially lucky man; the contingencies of life exerted a decisive impact on his life. He met a number of influential people. He several times happened to be in the right place at the right time. And not least, President Kennedy was assassinated. Even the seemingly personal fears and hates that Johnson struggled with—such as his unremitting contempt for "the Harvards," as he called them, the intellectuals of the Northeast—can be understood not only in psychological but social, historical and regional terms, as the author well knows: "The economic life of the many in the West became increasingly dependent on the decisions of the few in the East—the monopolists who kept prices up, the middle men who handled commodities on the exchanges, the railroads that levied heavy rates, the money powers that determined rates of currency, the political elite that supported a tax structure which bore disproportionately on land."

Johnson's grandfather was a populist; he fought for the hardpressed farmers and laborers of the South and the opening West. If Johnson was brought up in an embattled family, he was also brought up by parents remarkably in agreement; they both had a strong touch of idealism in them, and they both not only worried about the poor, but knew from bitter experience how hard it is in this country to challenge the wealthy, the powerful, on behalf of the impoverished and the weak. Their son never forgot that part of his psychological inheritance; he was, to the end, a restless, extravagantly self-centered, brutishly expansive, manipulative, teasing and sly man, but he was also genuinely, passionately interested in making life easier and more honorable for millions of terribly hardpressed working class men and women. His almost manic vitality was purposefully, intelligently, compassionately used. He could turn mean and sour, but we learn in this book that to the very end he had a lot more than himself and his place in history on his mind.

His populist sensibility, submerged but not vanquished by a recognition of the determined strength of oil millionaires, generals or military contractors, nevertheless kept coming up for air. He genuinely grieved his failures; they meant that millions of Americans were also more likely to

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experience suffering. In the end he was knowingly trapped; he was not an innocent—seduced or ill-advised by the Kennedy advisers he envied, suspected, deferred to, resented. The populism he inherited, he grew up hearing advocated, all along had possessed a racist, xenophobic and implicitly colonialist side: the frontiersmen, the farmers and squatters and cowboys and vagabond journeymen, the assorted pioneers, seekers, wanderers, hustlers, preachers, gold diggers (in the literal and slang senses) were not only objects of exploitation (by the big ranchers, the railroad companies and so on) but subject to their own particular version of narrowness and self-glory. In the South poor whites had turned on blacks; in the West poor whites had turned on Indians or Spanish-speaking people.

"The American Dream" Kearns connects to Lyndon Johnson has been for many a continuing nightmare. It is no mere radical rhetoric that connects the first encounters of our Pilgrims and Puritans with the Indians to our terrible experience in Vietnam. Writers like Thoreau and Melville knew how crazy and self-serving at least one segment of that "Dream" is. Johnson worried in his sleep about becoming paralyzed, and his biographer comes up with not very surprising interpretations which may have some connection to certain childhood events, but also connect to shared lusts and apprehensions and the willingness to fight hard and to the end with anyone in the way.

The best parts of this book are the long, carefully constructed, clearly written sections that are meant to help us understand how the Congress works, and how Lyndon Johnson—representative, senator, majority leader—went about building a career. The author is the best kind of political scientist; she has the ability and inclination to mix theory and the stuff of everyday Washington "life" into a knowing and lively presentation. One learns from her a lot about how this country is run—the mixture of high purpose and sleaziness that even our best politicians demonstrate. She offers, too, an excellent account of Johnson's life; and does a good job of weaving his Texas antecedents into the fabric of Washington politics, so long dominated quietly but firmly by men from the South or the West who had little hope or desire for the White House, but every conviction that no President could move very far without their nod. She also has a fine eye for other sides of Washington life: the much overlooked or downplayed power of the entrenched bureaucracy; the various social cliques, members of which constantly size one another up, constantly whisper catty, spiteful gossip; and of course, the standing army of lawyers, lobbyists, ambassadors, with their money, receptions, promises and threats.

Lyndon Johnson became regarded at the end of his presidency by millions of Americans as the quintessential wheeler-dealer, the man who lied his way into Vietnam, covering up troop call-ups and military expenditures until the nation had to come to terms with a *fait accompli*. Yet, he lacked the heart for arousing the nativism, the jingoism, the various sectional fears and hates he knew to exist, and knew might be manipulated by a President to help against student protesters. Soon enough there would be Richard Nixon, who had no such inhibitions. Johnson did indeed put us deeply into Vietnam, but he was trapped not only by his pride, his cunning, his dissembling, his agitated, grasping ego, but by his rock bottom principles, his decent, sensitive, generous instincts. In his own half-demented and dishonorable way, he struggled against hopeless odds to save what he had worked so hard for.

Johnson realized that once we had become full participants in the Vietnam war his program of domestic reform was finished. He knew his American history: the repeated sequence of a domestic social struggle followed by a war and conservative retrenchment—something socialist analysts have rather a lot to say about. Had it not been for the Vietnamese war, he kept insisting to himself and the many listeners he sought out and needed so badly, then the "Great Society" would have grown and grown, a tribute to his leadership and America's wealth, power and ever present capacity to accommodate within itself former exiles or outcasts.

But that tough, calculating, ever crafty bargainer, so realistic about his country and the possibilities and constraints within its government, may have had an illusion or two about the domestic scene he claimed to understand so well. It is by no means clear just how much "reform" our social and economic system will take, even without the intervention of a war; just how far even pushy, wily, disingenuous, ingenious, humane, warm-hearted Lyndon Johnson might have gone with his Great Society programs, even had he not found himself shipping hundreds of thousands of young soldiers to the jungles of Asia's mainland.

**Robert Coles**

## The Promise of Greatness by Sar A. Levitan and Robert Taggart

(Harvard University Press; $15)

One offshoot of the war against poverty of the '60s has been the emergence of an enormous policy analysis and program evaluation literature. The hundreds of books and monographs assessing Great Society undertakings are mostly expressive of a "new realism" mood—a perspective sobered by the shortcomings of positive government in its encounters with social complexity. Despite the diversity of their starting points, the journalists, academics, decision-makers and disappointed clients, whose writings make up most of this literature, seem to arrive at the same conclusions: the Great Society was an early casualty of Vietnam. Presidential rhetoric about the "unconditional" defeat of poverty was not supported by actual funding of programs. "In-kind" or "service" programs were largely ineffectual in their impact on poverty. The "welfare mess" was worsened by the Great Society.

*The Promise of Greatness* challenges these indictments with carefully researched and generally convincing particulars. In its various chapters on Johnson programs the book discusses an impressive breadth of evidence. It includes a number of excellent treatments of policy questions, such as the dispute between the "new economics" of the '60s and the "free market religion" of Nixon-Ford. By no means the least of its strengths is a somewhat unusual perspective, described by the authors as an emphasis on "the half-full rather than the half-empty cup." Throughout the analysis, Levitan and Taggart raise the question of which

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criteria should be used to evaluate program performance. All too often in the past the standards by which programmatic success has been judged have not been made explicit.

One standard of evaluation quickly rejected by Levitan and Taggart as impossible to meet is Lyndon Johnson's rhetoric. The Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, for example, did not become the "Magna Carta" of American cities. When more reasonable criteria are applied, they contend, the evidence on Great Society programs shows "a massive, overwhelmingly beneficial impact."

In this instance, however, the authors indulge in some rhetoric themselves. My reading of their chapters found them concluding, more often than not, that particular policy results were mostly beneficial, but seldom "massive" or "overwhelming."

For example, their discussion of compensatory education programs concludes that the consequences for disadvantaged students were mixed, at best, and possibly negligible. A similar judgment cannot be suppressed in their careful review of manpower programs, a point at which Levitan and Taggart ask "whether social investments have to be profitable." In a balanced account of health care policy they point up significant gains for elderly and low-income clients, and ably dispatch certain inflated claims made against the system. Yet they also report that Medicare and Medicaid contributed to an enormous surge of demand for health care, and contributed as well to a 175 percent increase in the cost of hospitalization over a nine-year period. In the process of making a case for in-kind assistance to the poor, Levitan and Taggart note the dramatic rise of the in-kind percentage of the aggregate poverty deficit from 1964 to 1974. Yet they provide an opening to advocates of the cash approach by noting, "If such aid had been converted to cash payments and distributed according to need among the poor, it would have almost eliminated poverty."

The best parts of the book consist of masterful analyses of complex policy issues. The chapter on income support includes a superior assessment of AFDC, and points up inconsistencies between political rhetoric and actual practice. Drawing on their previous collaboration, *Still A Dream*, Levitan and Taggart produce two substantive chapters of the impact of anti-poverty programs on blacks. Their analysis of social insurance programs, particularly Social Security and unemployment compensation, is both current and edifying.

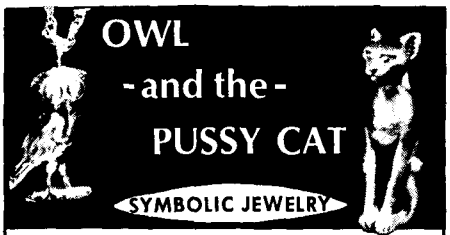
The book also has a few minor flaws worth mentioning. Levitan and Taggart fail to deal with the enormous political difficulties experienced by the Community Action Program in its formative years. This strife clearly affected the workings of programs in New York, Chicago, Nashville, San Francisco and other cities. When they recount how mayors and governors came to the rescue of OEO in 1974, the authors do not acknowledge that much of this support would not have materialized had Congress not resolved the political issues in favor of local government in 1967.

In their demonstration of why middle-income Americans had no *objective* economic basis for the "blue collar blues" in the early '70s, Levitan and Taggart ignore a number of studies that show *subjective* feelings of deprivation to be important political influences, *regardless* of actual conditions. The fact that the middle-income quintile did not pay for the modest income gains of the lower quintiles during the '60s, or lose ground in the slumps of the '70s, does not disprove a psychological argument based on *perceptions* of inequities.

On balance, however, these sins of omission are not enough to detract from the value of an impressive and sophisticated product.

**Emmett H. Buell, Jr.**

*Emmett H. Buell, Jr.*, is assistant professor of political science at Denison University.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## The Tides of Power: Conversations On the American Constitution by Charles L. Black and Bob Eckhardt

(Yale University Press; $10.95)

## The Compromising Of the Constitution by Rexford G. Tugwell

(Notre Dame University Press; $8.95)

In the months of passionate intensity that preceded Richard Nixon's resignation, the United States Constitution became a topic of dinner-table debate. Perhaps for the first time since the ratification controversies of 1788, ordinary citizens pondered the meaning of the Framers' words. What was an impeachable offense within the meaning of Article II, Section 4? To what extent did the claim of executive privilege have a constitutional basis? Even journalists were spotted carrying pocket-size editions of the Constitution. For a full year and more, it was in fact the living document that high-school civics teachers like to say it is.

But how quickly we forget. The current clamor for constitutional amendments to end busing, or to ban abortions, suggests that we have once again lost sight of the nature and function of the Constitution, or indeed, any constitution. We are confusing it with mere statutory law, and asking that it be made to serve the goals of substantive policy that are properly the business of legislation. We are falling back into a utilitarian attitude toward the Constitution.

In our haste to convert the Constitution into an instrument of power in the political marketplace, we are—left and right alike—in danger of losing sight altogether of the distinction between constitutional law and statutory law. As Charles Black remarks in *The Tides of Power*, the men who met in Philadelphia in 1787 gave us "constitutive law," that is,

> *law that makes the government, that legitimates the exercise of authority, that decides what offices shall exist, how the occupants shall be chosen, and what the relationships of legitimate power and authority shall be amongst them.*

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In short, the Constitution expresses the structural and procedural policy for determining which substantive policies are to be embodied in statutes. It is the law without which there is no law.

Most of the people who write about the Constitution nowadays either focus on constitutional litigation as a problem-solving mechanism, or they implicitly assume, with Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, that "The Constitution is what the Court says it is," and so concentrate on exegesis of judges' opinions. Both approaches take for granted the modernization of the Constitution, and the latter usually has the additional liability of being impenetrable to all but the most ambitious of scholars.

It is, therefore, especially heartening to see two new books that take seriously the constitutive aspect of the Constitution. Both *The Tides of Power*—a sort of dialogue between two old friends, Black of the Yale Law School and Congressman Bob Eckhardt of Texas—and *The Compromising of the Constitution*—a sort of lecture series by Rex Tugwell, a former New Deal brain truster—deal with the extent to which we have developed an unwritten constitutive law. Tugwell is less approving of the development, but like Black and Eckhardt, he proceeds from the premise that the most interesting constitutional questions remain the ones that animated the Framers—what happens when institutional arrangements are tested in real life? What kind of government emerges?

In the course of the long conversations transcribed and edited for this publication, Black and Eckhardt range over a number of evolutions in the way we organize the government and distribute its powers, ways not even hinted at in the tantalizingly brief charter that we have lived with for nearly 200 years. They cite the major parties and their methods of choosing candidates, the central role in the legislative process of congressional committees, the increasing role of federal courts as active policy-makers, and they discuss these (and other) developments at length.

The thing that they find most striking in their comparison of the bare text with what has grown up over the years is the fact that the Constitution was designed for congressional government. Yet today, woven around and through the Framers' provisions, we have a government dominated by a strong presidency, an activist judiciary and a powerful central bureaucracy to which Congress has ceded much of its power. In fact, *The Tides of Power* might be seen in part as a series of discussions on whether it would be a good idea to restore Congress to the leading role, and if so, how this might be done.

The question prods Black and Eckhardt into several intriguing remarks along the way. For example, both men agree that Presidents have come to use the veto power in a systematic way, as an expression of their own policy views, whereas the original intention seems to have been that the veto would be used only in self defense, to protect the office of President, or to reject legislation thought to be unconstitutional. Eckhardt goes so far as to say not only that the veto has become a tool of White House policy, but also that it is "a powerful obstacle to Congress's establishing any broad program" of its own. Black, meanwhile, suggests that "It would be to the long-run advantage of Congress as a whole, . . . if presidential vetoes were overridden simply as a matter of course."

It is a surprising thing to say. There are not, however, as many of these surprises as the dialogue form might be expected to produce. It is the peculiar virtue of a genuine dialogue to lead its participants down suddenly twisting intellectual paths, to lure from them ideas that might never have occurred to them in conventional expository form. Too much of the time, Black and Eckhardt are treading ground thoroughly familiar to them. Often they seem to be talking for the record rather than to each other. This is perhaps because they are mostly in agreement.

The result is that we, the readers, learn less than we might. A real dialogue generates contradictions that cry out for resolution, drawing the listener (or reader) into the circle of conversation. It is this that makes the dialogue, at its best, a superb teaching device, and this that provides the justification for what is otherwise an indirect and sometimes confusing approach to knowledge.

Rex Tugwell chooses the more conventional format of a series of chapters elaborating a central theme, but his theme is not conventional. Briefly stated, the argument is that because the Constitution contains no adequate provision for amendment, it has been compromised over the years by extra-constitutional improvisations that have

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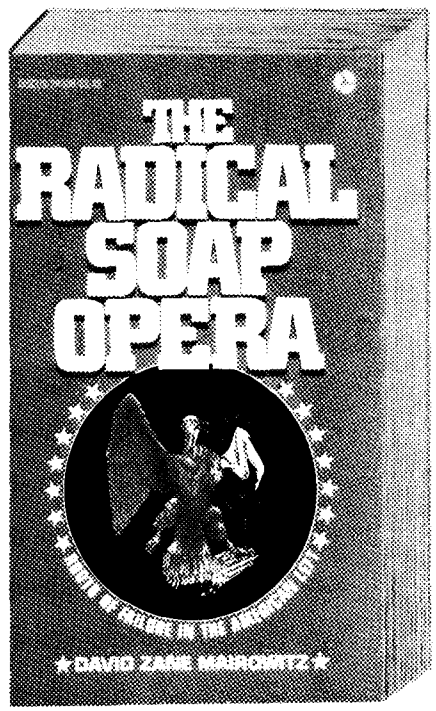


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acquired the force of the Constitution itself. He is of course referring to many of the same evolutions that Black and Eckhardt discuss. The difference is, he deplores the result, as lacking in legitimacy.

Tugwell claims that the Framers had no illusions about the government they were designing. They were well aware that, having consumed much of the hot summer of 1787 in settling a dispute between the nationalists and the partisans of state sovereignty, they were making deals and hasty decisions that would surely need revision. Unfortunately, he says, among those hasty decisions was the one on how revisions were to be made.

An amendment can be proposed by two-thirds of both houses of Congress, or two-thirds of the state legislatures can petition for a constitutional convention to write amendments. Either way, amendments so offered must be ratified by three-fourths of the states, through their legislatures or through conventions assembled for that purpose. "The people" have no part in it. They cannot offer amendments by initiative, nor are amendments placed on the ballot for direct ratification.

Tugwell's objections to the article on amendment are both philosophical and practical. The philosophical argument is that the Constitution creates the government, not the other way around. Therefore, as James Wilson once contended, the government cannot alter the Constitution, "because such an alteration would destroy the foundation of its own authority." Because sovereignty resides in the people rather than in the government, they alone have authority to amend the Constitution.

Practically, Tugwell argues, by locating both initiating and ratifying powers largely within the legislative branch of the government, the Framers:

> *made any amendment impossible that would affect the prerogatives of legislators . . . the result was what might be expected. That branch, needing reform the most, was made immune to it and became the rigid block in the American system. With every passing decade the Constitution would become more obsolete.*

In another sense, of course, "the Constitution" could not become obsolete. Times change, and if the charter as written did not speak to conditions unimagined by the Framers, and if it could not be rewritten, then perhaps it could be found to have, as Tugwell says, "the necessary elasticity to permit departures." Congress' inability or unwillingness to amend the Constitution opened up a vacuum, which the Supreme Court and the President quickly filled. In short, the difficulty of amendment led naturally to "interpretation" and improvisation, to judicial activism and the imperial presidency.

It is a neat but debatable argument. It is just as plausible to argue, for instance, that constitutional improvisation by judges and Presidents is an outgrowth of the ambiguity inherent in so spare and lean a document. If so, ease of amendment would be no remedy, for the reduction of ambiguity would require alterations and elaborations on such a scale as to render the Constitution unwieldly by its very bulk.

As Tugwell himself acknowledges early in the book, a detailed constitution addresses too precisely the fleeting political conditions surrounding its birth. It quickly passes into obsolescence, from which it can be rescued only by re-interpretation—precisely the device deplored by Tugwell—or by frequent and wholesale amendment, a process that might well impeach the legitimacy of the Constitution in the court of public opinion.

Illegitimacy is the one thing a constitution can never risk, for it is the main—perhaps the only—agent of legitimacy for substantive policy decisions. This is why it is unwise for us to force our Constitution too far into the bitter controversies of the moment, such as those over busing and abortion. Each time we do so, we demystify it a little, which even in this secular age is not necessarily a good thing. The Constitution is an organism, it has a life of its own, and when you kick it, it kicks back, as Richard Nixon found out to his sorrow and surprise. But like any living thing, it can be worn down, burdened with work it was never made for. *The Tides of Power* and *The Compromising of the Constitution* are welcome, for reminding us of what its proper work is.

**Peter McGrath**

*Peter McGrath* is a congressional aide and free-lance writer living in Washington.

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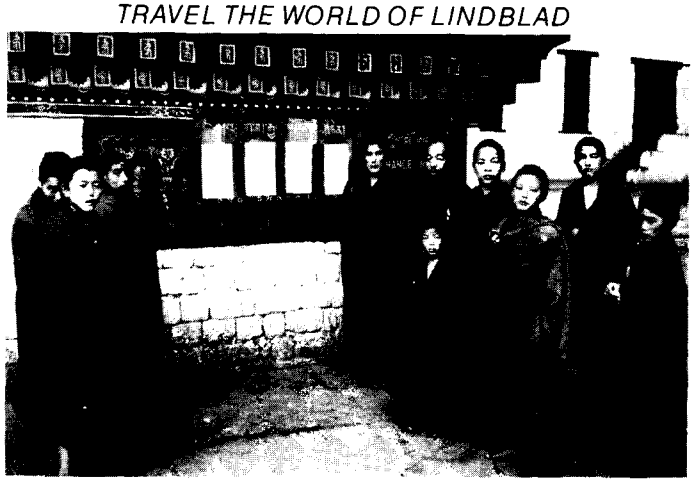

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# Tom Paine and Revolutionary America by Eric Foner

(Oxford University Press; $8.95)

For almost two centuries Tom Paine has been a thorn in the side of a good many Americans. Yet even those patriots who have viewed him as annoying, even unsavory, could not wholly gainsay his role in the Revolution. After all, *Common Sense* (January 1776), was the most important pamphlet of the era. At a time when a few thousand copies meant success, it sold 150,000, was read by many times that number and had an immense impact on the decision for independence. And the beginning of the first *Crisis* paper—"These are the times that try men's souls"—has always been among the immortal phrases of our history.

These writings alone might warrant their author a place in the revolutionary pantheon. But it has never been so. In 1802, when Paine returned to the US after almost 15 years of political activity in, mainly, France, he was refused lodgings at some inns, vilified by much of the press and criticized by such former colleagues as Sam Adams. President Jefferson, who had offered a warship for the journey, soon broke off the relationship. From then on, Paine's reputation continued to slump until Teddy Roosevelt, in the voice of proper America, could dismiss him as "a filthy little atheist."

There are various ways to explain this treatment. Offensive personal habits—drunkenness, excessive vanity, a love of flattery, peevishness and a tendency to be quarrelsome—are part of the story. More important is Paine's uncompromising brand of Deism. *The Age of Reason*, begun when he was a prisoner during the French Revolution, not only put salon-bred ideas into forceful and popular language, but also contained, as Eric Foner reminds us, "a book-by-book refutation of the Scriptures, in a tone of outrage and ridicule." It denounced Christianity as "unedifying . . . repugnant . . .contradictory . . . absurd" and treated the Bible with cheeky irreverence: "Were any girl that is now with child to say, and even to swear to it, that she was gotten with child by a ghost, and that an angel told her so, would she be believed?" Such attitudes cut Paine off from many who might have honored him, for in America social reform and even radicalism were fueled by the doctrines and personnel of religious groups.

Foner's work contains other hints about Paine's reputation. He was "one of the first intellectuals," a group which emerged in the 18th Century and considered itself above "personal, party or class loyalties." Paine could proudly write, "My country is the world and my religion is to do good." The latter was accomplished by helping to hasten the new age of republicanism. Paine did this with writing skills that flourished amidst upheaval. As Madame Roland pointed out, he was more fit "to scatter kindling sparks than to lay the foundation of government." Unfortunately, the democratic revolutions ushered in a most intensive age of nationalism. And just like monarchies, republican governments proved unsympathetic to the scouring questions of revolutionary intellectuals.

Obviously Paine was peculiarly suited for one special moment—or era—in history, and this is what Foner's study illustrates so well. *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* is not a full biography, but an "attempt to trace the relationships between . . . [Paine's] particular brand of radical ideology and the social and political history of revolutionary America." This strategy is both shrewd and illuminating. Good biographies of Paine already exist, but nowhere are the reasons for his impact upon revolutionary America or his subsequent failure in the French context laid so bare.

Paine's genius was as a pamphleteer of revolution. He was not an original thinker, but "one of the creators of [the] . . . secular language of revolution, a language in which timeless discontents, millenial aspirations and popular traditions were expressed in a striking new vocabulary." Many of the familiar slogans of the era ("rights of man," "age of revolution") flowed from his pen. He was the first to use "democracy" in its favorable, modern sense and the first to speak of "revolution" not as a cyclical phenomenon but as an irreversible social and political change.

Foner wisely avoids searching for the source of Paine's talents. Most of the book focuses on Philadelphia, his American home. The city was a microcosm of the tensions and conflicts that would wrack the colonies during the painful transition from traditional ways to modernity. A shakeup of classes; the emergence of new urban groups into the political consciousness; acrimonious debates over suffrage, price

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controls, paper money, banks and the promotion of international trade all swirled through Philadelphia and forced Paine to grapple with the issues of republicanism and burgeoning capitalism.

His position was consistently radical, a rejection of past institutions and an attempt to shape a future by using human intelligence. Unlike Virginia's revolutionaries, he harbored no rural longings, and he welcomed commercial development. But Paine was, as Foner emphasizes, from a preindustrial world. This meant he thought in terms of reasoned political debate rather than crowd action, and believed in a commonality of social interest rather than class struggle. His sympathy for the poor (part two of *The Rights of Man*, 1792, outlined a kind of welfare state) did not imply hostility to wealth. Paine's answer to economic problems was a purer republicanism. Ultimately he had faith that the rich would understand that great disparities of wealth were unhealthy for the whole social order; presumably such knowledge would lead to appropriate remedies.

Above all, Paine voiced the concerns of artisans, who comprised half the population of Philadelphia. Just entering into politics, they were solid republicans and supporters of free trade. But the artisan class contained a major division between masters and journeymen. Under the impact of market forces set free by the revolution, the split would broaden into owners and employees, then industrialism would make the gap unbridgeable.

There was no way for Paine to foresee this. In his Philadelphia, social divisions were still narrow. The city was small, rich and poor could rub shoulders in taverns and at cockfights, and it was possible, even necessary, for a revolutionary to believe the common interest could prevail. By showing Paine in this setting, Foner provides a striking picture of the strength and limitations of the radicalism that helped to form the United States. It should serve to underline the belief of Jefferson (and many later revolutionaries) in the need for periodic revolutions in human affairs.

**Robert A. Rosenstone**

*Robert A. Rosenstone* is professor of history at the California Institute of Technology.


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## The Twilight of Capitalism: A Marxian Epitaph by Michael Harrington

(Simon and Schuster; $10.95)

Karl Marx has been revised many times and in many different ways. Harrington in this book has the unique distinction of revising Marx by the cool assertion that Marx "misunderstood" himself, and therefore "misrepresented" Marxism to the world. In consequence he not only confused himself but Kautsky, Plechanov, Lenin and shoals of lesser disciples except Harrington who is confident that he knows what Marx really meant better than Marx apparently did himself. He dedicates himself to restating Marx's genial insights free of the blundering and inept words in which Marx obscured them. This goes much further than C. Wright Mills who called himself "a plain Marxist," as distinct from the vulgar and sophisticated varieties, listed 17 key propositions of Marx, and rejected all but one—and that a truism!—as "confused," "unclear" or "quite clearly wrong."

Were Harrington's book not so long and labored, one would be tempted to interpret its first part as an elaborate spoof. But since he is obviously serious and humorless, his procedure must be characterized as intellectually scandalous. He performs not a lobotomy on Marx but a brain transplant, substituting for Marx's closely knit grey matter a diffuse Hegelian mess. In the course of the operation, he abandons the best known text of Marx on historical

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materialism, the preface to the *Critique of Political Economy, 1859,* in which Marx asserts that "the mode of economic production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life."

The key sentences of the Preface and the varying, graphic metaphors Marx uses to convey his meaning have been critically evaluated for more than a hundred years in the light of the historical evidence. Harrington dismisses the entire Preface in which the mode of economic production is given primary but not exclusive causal importance, as the most vulgar expression of vulgar Marxism. He insists that a few sentences from an *unpublished* manuscript written earlier about the process of production in a market society, and which are irrelevant to the question of how the economy is causally related to the rest of the culture, give Marx's true meaning. That true meaning denies that economic base or foundation determines the general character of the political and ideological superstructure. Rather, it asserts that the culture of a society is an "organic whole" in which all parts interact (dialectically, of course!) and mutually determine each other. The mode of economic production on this view is no more basic or ultimately determining than the mode of dress, war or marriage. It would follow from this that Marx also misspoke himself in the famous sentence immediately following the one quoted from the published Preface: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness." Marx really meant, if we are to believe Harrington, that consciousness does determine social existence—as if Marx had not outgrown his Hegelian diapers. Harrington's reading brings to mind that Yiddish production of Shakespeare's *King Lear,* subtitled, *"erganzt und verbessert"* ("completed and improved").

Having dubbed Marx's Preface an indiscretion of his mature years, consistency requires that Harrington judge *The Communist Manifesto* an indiscretion of Marx's earlier years since it formulates the theory of historical materialism in even simpler terms. He must also jettison Marx's analysis of class. For Marx defined a class fundamentally by its role in the mode of production. Since Harrington denies that the mode of production played a decisive role in slave and feudal societies—he is somewhat ambiguous about capitalist society—he must regard Marx's statement that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" as another absent-minded aberration. The statement, to be sure, in its unqualified form is mistaken but it is no mistake that Marx believed it. He kept on republishing it in edition after edition to his dying day. His only modification was to exempt some primitive societies, after he became aware of Lewis H. Morgan's pioneer but misleading research.

Aware of the extremism of his operation on Marx, Harrington makes a desperate effort to save the characteristic Marxist emphasis on the mode of production by distinguishing between "the determinant" and "the dominant." The economy is always "determinant"; it is "dominant" only under capitalism. However in any genuinely organic system, causally this is a distinction without a significant difference. The economy, Harrington asserts, is determinant in two senses. First, it is "a sine qua non of life itself." But so is oxygen. Second, it is the source of a "light" or color or odor that pervades the entire society. But this obviously cannot be what Marx means by "basic" or primary because such phenomenal qualities have no executive character or causal effect in bringing about social change. It is not the color of the flash that kills: it is not the odor of bitter almonds that is fatal but the chemical effect of the cyanide.

Harrington takes the human body as a paradigm of an organic system. Human society is far from being as organic because of the greater influence of physical factors on it. Even in the human body not all aspects are "dialectically" interrelated. But regardless of the degree of interrelation it is downright silly to ask, what is the most decisive or dominant or determinant aspect in the functioning of the body — its digestive, nervous, circulatory, reproductive or skeletal system? Only in relation to some problem or difficulty or purpose is such a question meaningful and answerable. Similarly with society. The relevant causal factor is that which must be altered or controlled to achieve a desirable result.

Engels was right in proclaiming that above all Marx was a revolutionist. His theory and practice of social revolution was animated by a moral purpose Marx's own doctrines couldn't adequately explain. He made some discoveries whose


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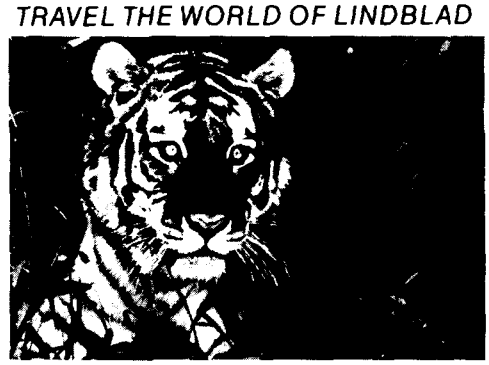

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validity was independent of his purposes. To that extent some of his contributions may be considered scientific in a broad sense. But with respect to his central predictions, events have proved most of them wrong. In any case we must sharply distinguish between the meaning of Marx's assertions and their truth or falsity, and not pretend when an assertion turns out to be false, that Marx couldn't really have meant it.

There is hardly a page in Harrington's book that does not invite correction or critical comment. In general whenever he ventures into philosophy, he is in water over his head. Although he seems to have taken a crash course in Hegel to help him understand Marx, he fails to see the difficulties and defects of the Hegelian logic which is an ontology rather than a theory of inquiry or scientific proof. Indeed, since it finds truth in the ineffable Whole it is incompatible with the methods of scientific experiment or abstraction which presuppose that *not* all things are interrelated. He disregards Marx's explicit statement that he was "coquetting" with Hegel's terminology, that his findings were derived "scientifically," independently of Hegel, and therefore must be judged by the historical, empirical evidence.

It is precisely that critical assessment of Marx's theories in the light of the empirical evidence that Harrington wishes to avoid. Although he admits that some specific predictions of Marx, and especially their timing, were disastrously wrong, he still fervently affirms the validity of Marx's analysis of capitalist development. He nowhere indicates what empirical evidence would falsify Marx's central contentions, and at what point in time. After all, it was not merely the timing of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism that Marx got wrong. He failed to predict the rise of the welfare state, fascism in all its varieties, bureaucratic collectivism (or communism), the triumphs of nationalism, and the impressive absolute gains in living standards of the working class under capitalism. In Harrington's eyes this in no way affects the basic validity of Marxism. Though history slay him yet will he trust and maintain his ways before It. No matter how long the twilight years of capitalism drag on, darkness will surely fall. He is not so confident as Marx was that it will be followed by a true socialist dawn. That is definitely to his credit.

Karl Marx's contributions, modified, qualified and corrected, are great enough to have entered into the mainstream of modern sociology and history. It is the rare sociologist or historian who doesn't acknowledge, regardless of his political faith, the heuristic fruitfulness of Marx's approach. Despite Harrington's contention to the contrary, the mode of production under feudalism and slavery did determine to a considerable extent the realities of political power and the distribution of goods and services although it does not explain, among other things, the *differences* between European Christian feudalism and Japanese Buddhist feudalism. But Marxism as a system may be laid to rest except as the state philosophy of totalitarian despotisms that call themselves socialist and as the religion of heretical Marxist sects.

Rejecting the classical Marxist positions on historical materialism and the class struggle, Harrington clings all the more fiercely to Marx's theory of surplus value and the economic analysis of *Das Kapital*. His argument is somewhat obscure: he seems to believe that because Marx was aware of the contradiction between the first and third volumes of *Kapital* that therefore there is no contradiction. Here, too, he ignores Marx's text by denying that Marx predicted the progressive pauperization of the working classes because he made allowance for local, limited and temporary improvements in their condition. Where Marx speaks of the workers' "growing mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation," Harrington insists that Marx was referring only to the *relative* difference in income and standards of living between workers and capitalists. On Harrington's view of Marx's meaning, even if workers were to enjoy real wages and fringe benefits of $50,000 annually in uninflated dollars, so long as there were a small group of millionaires, the workers would still be degraded paupers and Marx's account of their lot true.

Harrington does in places seek to soften the stark meaning of Marx's words especially when Marx speaks of "inevitability." This may be legitimate in view of Marx's occasional recognition of historical alternatives. But even so Marx was more wrong than right in charting the future of capitalism because he underestimated the effects of political democracy on its evolution. In the 20th Century the mode of political decision is as important for many aspects of daily life as the mode of economic production, and in some respects even more important. In *Kapital* Marx says of the natural laws of capitalist production that "these laws or tendencies are working with iron necessity towards inevitable results. The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future." From which it follows that in 1914 the United States and England were showing Russia, then the less developed capitalist country, the image of its own inevitable future! Actually, Lenin had more to do with that future than any economic law. His event-making role in the October Russian Revolution, together with the party he forged, succeeded in doing what on Marx's theory was historically impossible. They used political means to transform their primitive economy. The iron necessity was more in their ruthless will than in the laws of capitalist economy.

To me the first part of this volume is an additional argument against immortality. For if the human spirit survived the death of the body, Marx would have risen from his grave at Highgate in thundering protest. In life his fury exploded at lesser provocations.

The second half of Harrington's book is an attempt to show that the welfare state in no way refutes Marx's economic predictions. It merely postpones the inevitable day of reckoning. Harrington insists that the welfare state in the United States and elsewhere is still a capitalist society. In one sense it is. But it is also true that the size of the public sector, the power of free trade unions, the scope of regulatory agencies, makes capitalist society of 1976 more different from that of 1876, than 1876 is from 1776. The relevant questions are those of degree, direction and the possibility of transition to more democratic and socially responsible forms of economic investment and control. Once rational and more equitable tax laws, especially of inheritance, are legislated and en-

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forced, it will become clearer that our choice is not between capitalism or socialism but between *more or less* of either. We do not and cannot now live under the capitalism of Adam Smith—but there are other forms of socialism than those envisaged by Karl Marx, whose true Utopianism is expressed in his views about the withering away of the state. The state will not disappear. The administration of things will never replace administration by human beings. The democratic task is to make the state more responsive to the public interest as it protects basic human civil liberties.

The second section contains some well founded criticisms of current tax and energy policies. Their failure is attributed to the capitalist nature of the welfare state. To establish this Harrington abandons the notion of society as an "organic" totality in which there is reciprocal causation among plural factors and reverts to reliance upon the "primary" or ultimate cause—the capitalist structure—that cannot explain differential, specific effects. For him it is not the Vietnam war nor the cowardly and foolish tax policies of the Johnson administration nor the failure of Nixon's half-hearted price and wage controls nor the boycott of the OPEC countries that caused the crisis of unemployment and inflation, but the "profound limitations of capitalist society." Regardless of the problem, it seems as if it is always capitalism that in the last analysis is responsible for our failure to solve it. But since welfare state capitalism is certainly compatible with tax, energy and income policies that more equitably redistribute the burdens of the recession, if only enough citizens can be persuaded of it, capitalism cannot be the decisive factor in explaining the choice among policy alternatives. Our mixed economy does not preclude the possibility of a guaranteed family income at a decent level or a comprehensive national health insurance plan any more than it did the Civil Rights Act of the '60s.

Harrington's analysis is as enlightening as the observation on the death by lung cancer of a heavily addicted smoker, that his death was not merely the result of his addiction but also of "the profound limitations" of the human organism.

A scientific approach to social as well as medical problems deals only in proximate causes. The limitations of capitalist society are much more modifiable than those of the human organism. In *Kapital* Marx blamed capitalism for the fact that the life expectancy of the workers of Manchester was 17 years. Today it is close to 70. By the same token capitalism should be given credit for that. One would have expected someone as partial to Hegel as Harrington to be more sympathetic to the possibility that a gradual "quantitative" change in the powers of the capitalistic welfare state through greater consumer and labor representation may result in a "qualitative" change. To facilitate this it may be necessary among other things to find another vocabulary. Those who put freedom or democracy first may lose their allegiance to "capitalism" when they discover that when human welfare is at stake, it puts profits first. But they may have good reason for fearing "socialism" more. Harrington quite properly judges capitalism not by its ideals and theory but by its historical practices. One must therefore judge socialism equally not by its rhetoric but by its historical practices. Any reasoned comparison of the historical fruits of both will conclude that the prospects for a humane, prosperous and free society are far greater under the democratic welfare state than under any current socialist alternative. Workers who cherish their free trade unions know this best of all.

**Sidney Hook**

*Sidney Hook's* most recent book is *Revolution, Reform and Social Justice* (New York University Press).

## Sports in America by James Michener

(Random House; $12.50)

In this post-Olympic period, jaded as we are with bitterly competitive and chauvinistic sport, we still recall having been assured all the while that the modern Olympic philosophy is that the important thing is to participate, not to win. Americans have long known the emptiness of the phrase, St. Vincent Lombardi having observed that winning isn't everything—it's the only thing, and St. Leo Durocher having pronounced that nice guys finish last. Without totally disagreeing, a nice guy named James Michener, who also happens to be a novelist, and who has followed sport in America for more than 50 years, has largely ignored the quadrennial Olympic aberration and assessed the phenomenon in its American context.

One of the many apt cartoons reprinted in Michener's book shows a Little League coach, in a parody of coaching apothegems, exhort a yard-high lad, "Okay, Old Buddy, get in there and play the game win or lose. But remember, nice guys finish last, there's no such word as chicken, and every time you lose you die a little." Two other cartoon captions sum up Michener's preoccupations neatly. In one, the wife, answering the telephone in a well appointed home, with pictures on the wall, large plants visible, and the family clustered about the color tube, answers the phone with, "I'm afraid we're kind of tied up. Eddie and Paul are watching Game of the Week, then the Tulsa Open, Aussie Tennis and the Big Fight reruns. Karen's signed in for the Wide World of Sports, Celebrity Bowling, Gymnastics from Poland and the Roller Derby. I'm watching the Innsbruck slalom trials, African Safari, free falls and gliding." A one-liner takes care of the other caption, as an irate fan leaves the college stadium muttering, "54-0! What the hell do they do with my alumni dues?"

Sport in America, it has been obvious since the marriage of teams and television in the late 1940s, is an increasingly vital cog in the American economy as well as an inextricable part of the American social and cultural fabric. Bread and circuses? You bet. But Michener, who loves spectator games as well as participatory athletics, worries that our economy as well as our ethical values are being warped by Big Sport and its accent on winning, and that while our deteriorating bodies are awash with well advertised beer as we laze in the easy chair before the color tube, we substitute fantasy for authentic physical fulfillment. Halfway through the long book my own feelings of self-guilt had become so unbearable that I switched off Monday night baseball (which had followed the Game of the Week on Saturday and the Sunday doubleheader) and walked the dog.

Michener is interested in sports and health for the individual as well as sports and well-being in general for society. Thus he covers ways of participating in athletics physically. as well as our ways of participating vicariously, which have been molded by the media, and by our emotional needs, which the media exploit. There are reasoned chapters on

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children in sports, women in sports, the exploitation of the athlete, the pressures upon the colleges and universities (which in no other nation have an entertainment obligation), the financing of sport, sport and religion, sport and patriotism, the increasing violence in sport that has resulted from the brutality of competition, the impact of government intervention.

It hardly need be said that Michener is no Jack Scott (of more recent notoriety in the Patty Hearst case). In fact, Scott may be the only revisionist thinker in modern sport not quoted or alluded to, for Michener's aim is not to destroy the sports establishment but to modify its most heinous abuses and promote the American ideal of sport as a means of health maintenance and almost-clean fun and games. In the process we are subject to more sincerity than fiction requires, often in the form of charts and hortatory point-by-point recitals and analyses. We are also subject to some of the poorest writing since Michener first began pounding his typewriter. Some sentences are ungrammatical even by the modest standards of contemporary freshman English.

While the anecdotes and the autobiography are pleasant reading, the most memorable sections of *Sports in America* are fiction. Michener, to cover his sources and protect his friends, invents several mythical schools intent on the Top Ten. One, a Catholic university, St. Jude's, eventually gives up football for basketball, which requires less expensive facilities and far less upkeep, and recruits itself, mainly via six-foot-ten ghetto blacks, into the Big Time. But Michener's mythical hero is a Big Football coach who epitomizes some of the reputed vices and all of the known virtues of Bear Bryant of Alabama, Darrel Royal of Texas and Bob Devaney, former coach at Nebraska. "Honest John" Taggart is head coach at Jefferson U., a large state university that provides him with a budget of nearly four million dollars a year to corral the top high school players, cultivate the media, court influential legislators in the state capital, and capture the wealthiest alumni. For obvious reasons he campaigns—successfully—to add to the stadium a lavish, $680,000 press box. His athletes live high (while isolated from normal students) in a plush dorm labeled the "Taggart Hilton," drive cars "loaned" by local businessmen, have little trouble making grades, and via various subterfuges have a supply of spending money. Even the blacks, many from substandard schools that left them barely literate, thrive under the benign regimen, although when later cut from the pros (which can only use a fraction of collegiate football brawn) they often have no future, having failed at college to learn anything. Over and over the cycle is repeated, with Taggart and his assistant coaches jetting about on recruiting missions in private planes provided by wealthy alumni, signing up more freshmen than the team can use—"so that Woody and Bear and Ara can't get their hands on them." At the big-time schools, Michener believes, the games are really played "not between the universities and not between the players, but between the coaches. . . ."

Despite the near-criminal abuses in football and basketball, Michener concludes that intercollegiate athletics is a good thing. For millions it provides popular entertainment; for hundreds of thousands of participants it provides recreation—and some practice in coping with success and failure. Some fewer thousands of young people (and their parents) who see sport, usually frustratingly, as the avenue to upward ecalation in their lives are the ones who pay the price for the rest of us.

Michener is often so interesting that we can forgive the hasty generalizations and the utopian proposals while sympathizing with his stands on sports issues, deploring his omissions (gymnastics, for example), enjoying his stories, and promising ourselves to look in the library for at least the last book on sport praised as the one to read. One needs, in fact, a red pencil to mark all the titles worth looking up, although reading them all will postpone the physical exercise we all need more than the reading.

For anyone both literate and sports-minded, Michener's ruminations become more than a survey of the terrain—in many ways the book is an annotated bibliography. Not only has the novelist participated himself in activities ranging from baseball to scuba diving; and not only has he observed sumo wrestling, bullfighting and stock car races, in amphitheaters from Roman survivals to the New Orleans Superdome: Michener (or his researcher, Joseph Avenick) appears to have examined every publication on sport in English—fiction and nonfiction, including the sociological and scientific papers—since the 1920s. They're all here, not in a handy alphabetical list at the end of the book but woven through the text. (Many, however, can be located in the front matter, in the least-read section of any book—the acknowledgments to utilize copyright material.)

One may not agree with many of Michener's impossibly complex suggestions and conclusions, but the heaping measure of anecdote and detail to be traversed in one's search for what next to read on the subject can itself make the effort worth doing. And for at least two weeks afterward, sport on the tube will never be the same.

**Stanley Weintraub**

*Stanley Weintraub*'s forthcoming book, *Four Rossettis: A Victorian Biography*, will be published this fall (McKay).

## Big Bill Tilden
## by Frank Deford

(Simon and Schuster; $8.95)

Frank Deford's book on Tilden, which grew out of a two-part article in *Sports Illustrated*, is a modest enterprise in most respects. It does, however, assemble in a straightforward way and for the first time the information necessary for an understanding of this impressive and tragic figure. Deford is not especially penetrating, but he does provide the essential facts for reflection upon Tilden, who emerges from his account as a figure who both in isolation of spirit and perfection of metier possesses affinities with such unlikely personages as Hemingway and Joyce. Tilden could easily provide the subject for another psycho-artistic chapter in Edmund Wilson's *The Wound and the Bow*.

My own life touched Tilden's briefly and marginally during the summer of 1945. For me and for my 13- and 14-year-old cronies who were competing in boys' tennis tournaments around Long Island, Tilden was a sort of god. That summer he began hanging around our club in Forest Hills.

I happened to be taking lessons from two different tennis pros at the time. One remarked, enigmatically, that Tilden was "a pathetic fellow." The other said that Tilden was "a horse's ass" and dropped the subject. All of that meant nothing to me and my friends. We assumed they were jealous of Tilden. We knew that Tilden was over 50 years old

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and earlier that year had blasted the current champion Frank Parker off the court, and had done the same thing to a previous champion and current leading contender, Ted Schroeder. We figured that if Tilden could do that when he was practically an old man then he must have been uncontainable 20 years earlier. We were right.

Tilden struck me as excessively flamboyant and theatrical, traits I vaguely attributed to his having played in such mythic locales as Paris, London, the Riviera and California. I remember playing set after set one morning with a junior protégé Tilden had brought with him from the West Coast, while Tilden himself sat above us on the clubhouse porch loudly counselling his young player: Lob! Lob! Lob! The backhand! Now! Go to net! It all seemed rather overdone, as did the tennis shirts Tilden then favored, featuring very broad vertical black and white stripes, an obvious outrage when everyone else was required to wear white. Tilden's shirts went over big with the clubhouse committee.

Tilden, however, mostly ignored other adults, though he was full of eye-widening tennis stories for us younger players. He explained, for example, how Lacoste had beaten him once in a Davis Cup match in Paris. The French froze the balls. It was their answer to Tilden's serve. They kept the balls under the stands in an ice box. Tilden could not have served an ace with a howitzer.

One piece of advice Tilden gave me that summer seemed startling and even heroic. In July, enormously eager about my junior tournaments, I pulled an arm muscle. All the coaches counselled rest. "Play right through it," Tilden said. "Dominate it." He indicated that nothing like a mere muscle could possibly stand in his way, and, as Deford shows, Tilden could virtually ignore physical pain. I "played right through it" and the arm healed.

Deford spends a good deal of time on Tilden's psychological problems, which intensified late in his life and poisoned his last years, but they turn out to be inextricably bound up with his greatness. Emotionally crippled in most ways, Tilden was able to focus his powerful feelings—prominent among them a desire to dominate—entirely on tennis.

In view of his childhood, those psychological problems seem inevitable. Tilden's haute bourgeoisie home in then-fashionable Germantown, Pennsylvania, makes Dostoevski by comparison resemble Anthony Trollope. Nine years before he was born, three earlier Tilden children, two girls and a boy, died of diphtheria. Six years after that, Tilden's brother Herbert was born, and then the mother deeply desired a girl to replace the two she had lost. When Tilden arrived he was therefore a big disappointment, but the mother made the best of her bad luck by raising him as if he were a girl. Named William T. Tilden, Junior, he was actually called "June" throughout his childhood. He was kept out of school and tutored at home. The mother maintained the pretense that he was frail and if not always ill at least about to be ill. On his 21st birthday, astonishingly enough, he asked for and was given a debutante-style coming-out party.

Tilden's mother died in 1911, his father in 1915, and then, at the age of 22,


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released apparently by these deaths, the strange and isolated young man underwent a spectacular metamorphosis. He seems to have been reborn, as symbolized by a name change. Henceforth he was no longer "Junior," much less "June," but William T. Tilden II.

So far he had shown no promise and accomplished nothing. As a tennis player he had not even been good enough to make his college varsity at Penn. Beginning in 1915, however, this new being, "William T. Tilden II," gave his life totally to tennis. "He suddenly was compelled to want to be supreme in the game of lawn tennis," recalls one acquaintance. "Nobody ever worked so hard at anything as he did at tennis."

The next year, 1916, when Tilden was 23, he ranked an insignificant 70th in the US and lost in the first round at Forest Hills. Four years later, through total application, he had perfected the game that would make him champion of the world and the best player of all time. For nine consecutive years he would be ranked first in the US. Largely because of the interest generated by Tilden a new concrete stadium would be built in Forest Hills. At this point, in 1920, a second self-invention appears to have occurred, a new persona strode forth, and the name changed again: "Big Bill Tilden," the flamboyant world figure. He had made himself not only into a total player, possessing every shot plus numerous variations on every shot, but also into a total student of the game. In the following sentences, which he later wrote, the word "love" should be understood as utterly central: "The great majority of players are not students of the game. It is the love of tennis that has led me to the point where I never hit a shot without conscious application of twist or the deliberate attempt to use none."

In view of the scandals and jail terms of Tilden's sad last years, what everyone knows about him is that he was a homosexual. That is true, but in a sharply qualified sense. Throughout his adult career his personality seems extraordinarily narcissistic. It is doubtful that he ever really had *relations*, homosexual or otherwise, with anyone. On Deford's showing, he was completely self-regarding and onanistic. The following contemporary account of his 1924 Davis Cup victory over Gerald Patterson of Australia is highly suggestive of his temperament: "Throughout the Patterson match, Tilden looked as if he were merely practicing strokes or experimenting with them. He paid comparatively little attention to Patterson's shots. If they were good, as they not infrequently were, he let them go; or, if he could reach them, he would return them with interest. But it was his own shots he was thinking of most of the time, studying them as if he were in a laboratory and they were specimens." Not at all surprisingly, when his tennis finally faded, he was drawn backward toward adolescence and searched among a series of boy players and other boys for some younger version of himself.

A few days before his death through heart failure in 1953 at age 60, Tilden and a friend played doubles against a couple of Canadians who were on the UCLA team. Tilden began proceedings by announcing that this was a Davis Cup match, Canada *vs.* the US. "He was exhilarated," recalls one of the Canadians. "He conducted a draw," and, as they played, "he said things like 'Advantage, United States,' and 'Canada leads, four games to three, first set . . .' We were just playing to get some practice, but he was like a real tiger, and he agonized when they lost. It was all very real to him."

**Jeffrey Hart**

*Jeffrey Hart* is professor of English at Dartmouth.

# Reconsideration

## The Quiet American

Certainly in general it is true, to paraphrase Auden's famous line, that literature makes nothing happen. *Hamlet* has ended neither regicide nor fratricide, Jane Austen has not brought an end to snobbery, not even *Babbit* has ended Babbitry, but has simply given a label to a form of behavior the easier to malign for its possession of a name. It is a truism that works of literature are not in general primary agents of reform. Indeed we do learn from them, but slowly, and for the most part individually, privately. In the end they don't make much happen.

Such thoughts are the perhaps inevitable result of a rereading of *The Quiet American*, Graham Greene's famous, understated, almost frail short novel set in the Saigon of the early '50s, not long before the seige of Dienbienphu and the subsequent French withdrawal from Indochina. For the novel, although completed in 1955, is not about the French, but about us Americans. Published almost a full decade before the first major escalations of the Johnson administration were to make the war suddenly a hateful reality for most of us, the book, remarkable in its prescience, reads like an explicit prophecy of exactly what was to occur in the disastrous years following 1964. And rereading it now, with memories of Hamburger Hill and Mylai, of carpet bombing and defoliation, of "anti-personnel devices" and "body counts" and "tiger cages" and "Vietnamization" still receding gradually into the cynicism of our recent history like the dead bodies in Greene's novel settling slowly into the canal at Phat Diem, one's response is inherently simple: one marvels all over again that the war really happened. We are, of course, encouraged by our leaders to forget as quickly as possible, to disregard, and it is necessary to blink one's eyes a few times and clear one's head to bring it back. And then, perhaps as one turns the last page, come the questions: Didn't we pay attention to anything in the Cold War years? Didn't we learn a thing? Didn't anyone even read this book?

Of course they did (and still do; it's now in its 20th paperback printing). Yet, feeling a little more reasonable, one can't in truth expect that to have made much difference. Only in retrospect can one indulge in the fantasy that, if only heeded, a prophetic book might have saved us. And this book, after all, is just a novel, not a Rand study or a commission report, and not an especially "sensational" novel at that. Perhaps not Greene's best book, it is still Greene in full command of his obviously estimable powers. But there is another way to measure it: quite simply, after more than 20 years of competition, it is still

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the best novel to have come out of the Vietnam war. And it is about us.

The novel's publication in this country in 1956 caused both resentment and a degree of what must have seemed at the time legitimate objective criticism. Praised for its skill, readability and mastery of the characteristics it shares with detective fiction, it was condemned, from both the left and right, for its caricature, anti-Americanism and political naïveté. Nathan A. Scott called its portrayal of Americans "gross nonsense" and lamented seeing "so fine an intelligence as Greene's. . .embracing such irresponsibility in world politics." R. G. Davis, in *The New York Times*, argued that Greene's "caricatures of American types are. . .crude and trite," and Ronald Stead, in the *Christian Science Monitor*, called both the book's main characters "fatuous," then added, with an irony that would become apparent only a decade later with our "official" entry into the war, "it is hard to know whether the author is presenting a thesis or a burlesque." And so on. A voice from the chillest depths of the Cold War, Diana Trilling condemned Greene for "pro-Communism," and Philip Rahv said sadly that the novel expressed "immoderate opinions," then doubted in turn that "Greene is sufficiently political minded to do justice to such considerations."

What it amounts to is that the critics could not in the end quite permit themselves to take the book seriously—a pardonable enough offense, certainly, had history not proven them so dreadfully wrong. The war in Vietnam, an inherited skirmish in the long Cold War, developed before it was over into a human and political debacle the full magnitude of which we have not yet fully perceived. And the truth is that Greene's analysis of the American motivation in that war is not really, in the end, trite or shallow or irresponsible, but rather unpleasantly accurate. We are not a people who take criticism easily, nor are we—I'll go ahead and say it—especially good at self-analysis. What happened with Greene's portrayal of his fictionalized American character, Alden Pyle, was that he did indeed present us with a caricature of ourselves. It was met with resentment and a certain bristling hostility. The only trouble lay in the fact that the caricature, by and large, was true.

The story itself is essentially simple. Narrated in the rather stoically philosophical voice of Thomas Fowler, an aging English newspaper correspondent, it develops in two complementary lines. Alden Pyle, the "quiet American," falls in love with Fowler's Vietnamese mistress, Phuong, offers her a respectable American marriage, and succeeds in taking her from Fowler. At the same time, Fowler becomes gradually aware of Pyle's true purpose in Saigon: ostensibly employed in the Economic Aid Mission, he is in fact working undercover on orders from Washington to form a military "third force," both anti-Communist and anti-colonialist, which will "save" Vietnam. Working with the secretive and renegade Gen. The, he arranges a "demonstration" bombing in a Saigon square, bungles it, kills no colonels but only large numbers of civilians in the marketplace, including women and children. Increasingly appalled and outraged by Pyle's uninformed recklessness and moral callousness, Fowler at last betrays him to the Vietminh, who, with Fowler's tacit cooperation, murder him. Pyle dead, Phuong returns to the Englishman Fowler.

It is a reworking of the traditional story of the innocent, callow American and the worldly, sophisticated European. Passing middle age, a smoker of opium, priding himself on being politically "*dégagé*" and on the emotional restraint of his own rather closely analyzed life, Fowler is both attracted by Pyle's youthful innocence and appalled by its potential for foolishness and danger. He first sees Pyle "coming across the square towards the bar of the Continental," and he describes "an unmistakably young and unused face flung at us like a dart. With his gangly legs and his crew cut and his wide campus gaze he seemed incapable of harm." And yet a moment later Pyle "looked quickly up into the hard noon glare. 'Was that a grenade?' he asked with excitement and hope." For Fowler perceives that Pyle "was determined—I learned that very soon—to do good, not to any individual person, but to a country, a continent, a world." And it is this determination that leads finally to the gratuitous slaying of women and children in the public square, to Fowler's conclusion that "Innocence is a kind of insanity," and to his appeal, after Pyle's death, "God save us always. . .from the innocent and the good."

What was missed by the critics 20 years ago is the exact nature of Greene's satire. It is true that Pyle is the pampered, vitamin-enriched *naif* in the extreme—and perhaps the social caricature does detract from the dramatic force of the novel. But it doesn't detract from its truth. Nor are Fowler's (or Greene's, if that is the case) grumbling and sometimes bitter denunciations of air conditioning, underarm deodorants, mechanical sex ("Is that how you make love in America—figures of income and a blood test?"), and excessive drinking of milk. Yet it is true enough that these sorts of things do tend to separate us from the natural, homely, perhaps "real" textures of life, which gets closer to the point. For *The Quiet American* is largely about our failure to perceive life generously for the untidy thing it really is—a composition not of smooth shapes and neatly abstract planes but of myriad individual elements and irreducible details, social, political and personal, not always pleasant, perhaps, not always orderly or even agreeable, but *there*. Here we can see the specific failure of perception or emotion that Greene speaks of as "innocence": our characteristic failure to see or experience life as quite real. For we see it abstractly. What the satire is all about finally is our inability to think, politically or morally, or perhaps even to feel, without recourse to abstraction.

Pyle comes to Indochina as the superior outsider ("You talk like a European, Thomas. These people aren't complicated."), zealous in his mission to fix everything up once and for all. He is held back—and made dangerous—only by the dreadful disability of being in possession of merely a single idea, and failing as well to perceive the grotesque inadequacy of that one. His mentor is one York Harding, whose Cold War book *The Role of the West* advocates the formation of the "Third Force" that Pyle strives to create. Harding, Fowler explains to the detective Vigot after Pyle's death, is "a superior sort of journalist—they call them diplomatic correspondents. He gets hold of an idea and then alters every situation to fit the idea." And the "idea," of course, is Democracy, the single abstraction that

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stands like a near-opaque glass between Pyle and the realities around him. Fowler may be unreliable in his personal satire of Pyle, for after all he is jealous of losing Phuong, but there is no reason not to trust him when he talks about Pyle politically. "He never saw anything he hadn't heard in a lecture hall," he tells Vigot, "and his writers and his lecturers made a fool of him. When he saw a dead body he couldn't even see the wounds. A Red menace, a soldier of democracy."

Pyle is a portrait of us at our least imaginative, of that part of us that chooses not to think but to substitute a few abstract and therefore rigid assumptions for the process of real thought. Familiar indeed—the kind of mind-set (I use the mechanical metaphor; it's around me all the time) that can prolong a war for a decade though it's apparent at the outset that we're on the wrong side, or even that there's no "right" side to be on; the kind that quickly confuses means and ends or fails to distinguish them, that creates domestic secret police in the name of freedom, that opens other people's mail, calls criminality righteousness, loses *sight* of things. In the end, among other things, it's a matter of staying human. At the scene of the bombing in the square Pyle "looked at the wet on his shoes and said in a sick voice, 'What's that?'" It was blood, of course, and Fowler asks him, "Haven't you ever seen it before?" Pyle withdraws to the comfort of his abstraction and of the bureaucracy that embraces it: "I must get a shine before I see the Minister." Later, having begun arrangements from Washington for monetary reparations to the families of the dead, he says to Fowler, who by then has already betrayed him: "They were only war casualties. . . It was a pity, but you can't always hit your target. Anyway, they died in the right cause."

Caricature or not, it strikes home, and history, the ruthless arbiter in these matters, has given it the additional grim stamp of truth. The only real difference between Greene's portrayal of Pyle's adventures and the more ghastly adventure we entered into as a nation after 1964 is the difference in their scale. Fowler can tell Vigot that "Harding wrote about a Third Force. Pyle formed one—a shoddy little bandit with two thousand men and a couple of tame tigers. He got mixed up." Just as we did, in spades. It's not pleasant to think about, and no more pleasant to realize that in the small instance lies the embryonic spectre of the great. Fowler explains about Pyle to the American economic attaché: "Yes. They killed him because he was too innocent to live. He was young and ignorant and silly and he got involved. He had no more of a notion than any of you what the whole affair's about, and you gave him money and York Harding's books on the East and said, 'Go ahead. Win the East for democracy.'" But enough. One tires of carrying burdens of guilt. Perhaps, even without the guilt, one can understand why the early critics of the book all drew back from it at a certain point, even in 1956. After all, it's a terrible sort of thing, a serious book, seriously done, a book about sincerity and murder.

**Eric Larsen**

*Eric Larsen* is a free-lance writer living in New York City.

# The Back of the Book

## The Carter Congregation

Ever since the trash was thrown out of the White House everyone has assumed that what we want from now on is a presidency without illusions. Yet the candidacy of Jimmy Carter seems only to prove that we prefer grand illusions to petty ones, and that we may be willing to lie to ourselves more readily than we will accept the lies of others in order to preserve those illusions. I'm thinking of that old-time religion that Carter uses—not his personal faith in God, but religion as popular culture. No one since Oral Roberts has practiced it so vehemently, and not even Roberts saw so many crutches.

Political analysts will explain Carter's religion as strategy, smart or dumb, for managing a new American populism. For cultural analysts the question is why Carter appeals so strongly to a hard-nosed nation, one that now more than ever ought to be wary of magicians. (As of July 26, the Harris poll has Carter leading Ford and Reagan by 40 percent.) One easy conclusion to jump to is that we like to be mystified by our politicians because their tricks are more attractive than our realities. But I think the answer is shallower than that, that it lies flat on the surface of our actions, where most of our answers lie.

When at the close of the Democratic convention, Martin Luther King, Sr., shouted "Surely the Lord sent Jimmy Carter to come on out and bring America back where she belongs," you could almost hear Carter utter the first "Amen." Carter believes in the rhetoric that surrounds him. His own speech accepting the nomination was built on abstractions, mostly devotional: "healing," "faith," "the truth," "quiet strengths," "nobility of ideas," "new vision," "grace," "compassion," "love." Like King's prayer and Barbara Jordan's keynote address, Carter's speech used the tactics of a gospel sermon. There was nothing subtle about the effects, nothing hidden in the fact that for the audience the appeal of the speeches, of the convention as a whole, was emotional. Delegates wept openly at the sight of King, though perhaps more in an epiphany of his murdered son than for the revelation of Jimmy Carter.

Nevertheless, the appeal of this rhetoric is undeniable—that revival style of oratory, so moving with its incremental repetitions, its pleading and thunder, first stirring then whipping an audience into general agreement. It creates a mass out of an individual; people hear each other breathe, see each other nod. By the time the sermon is at full speed, congregations are enthralled by abstractions that they might not have acknowledged, of which they might have been skeptical, when the speech began. Finally they are ready to weep and shout, even if they are not always sure why.

Christianity was imposed on black Americans, which accounts, paradoxically, for the vitality of the black church. The religion that provided solace was

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also the religion that represented bondage, an instrument to channel political energies away from white sheriffs and safely toward heaven. But heaven was a long way off compared to the omnipresence of starvings and killings. So it took a lot of shouting to believe in a distant salvation, and a lot of faith to believe in a God who, as the young rebel Harriet says in Langston Hughes' *Not Without Laughter*, "don't like niggers."

Now we have a presidential candidate who uses the rhetoric, if not the voice, of the black church in order to pitch his congregation to a steady ecstasy. And we, in our turn, use it as well, gladly clapping, weeping and rolling our eyes upward. Recently David Broder of *The Washington Post* wrote that the "marriage [of Carter and Mondale] was made not in Madison Square Garden, but in heaven." And Carter's mother called the convention "sacred." Carter himself tells us that he is the come-and-get-it day, that although we may not understand the abstractions now, come November, when we cross the river, all will be clear. According to the polls, most people want to believe him.

Yet one feels a certain desperation in this effort, read in the hectic enthusiasm with which the rhetoric is swallowed; and maybe a fear, as in the black church, that after all the shouting on the way to the river there may be nothing on the other side. A doubtful religion makes for a hell of a noise while it lasts. But revenge against false gods is never pretty, and none of us is going to have to travel to a land of no return to discover what the shouting was all about.

**Roger Rosenblatt**

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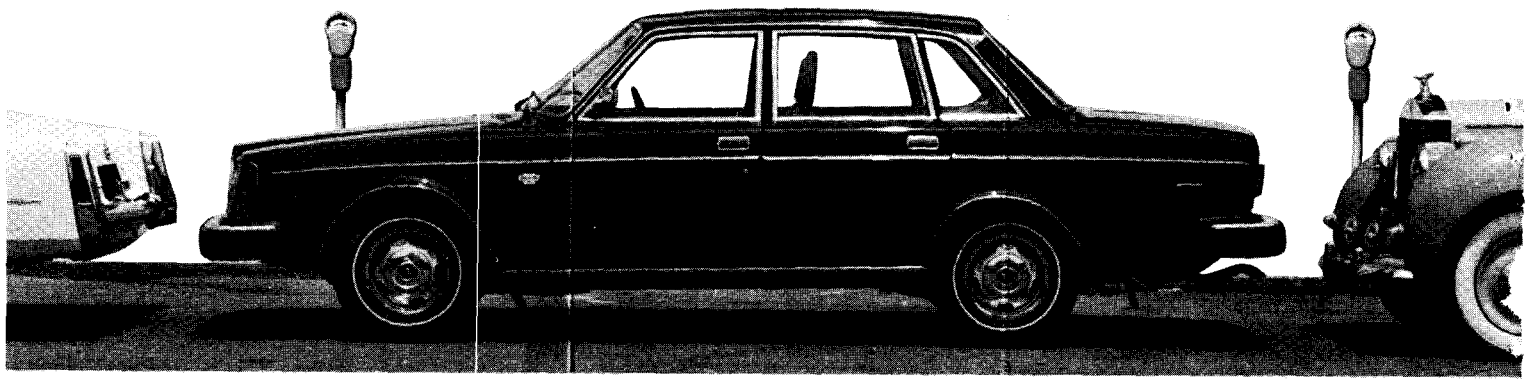
# We sell a car that costs a lot of Money but doesn't look like It. Volvo.



When you buy a Volvo, you're not paying for a lot of obvious status symbols. You're paying for safety built in style. For things like hidden roll bars that protect passengers in case of collision up to 60 m.p.h. And you're paying for Volvo's famed durability that keeps it running and running and running with hardly a temperamental moment. And for Volvo's famous orthopedically designed seating; the exquisite comfort, the uncramped head and leg room and wrap around visibility that, again, sets Volvo apart.

In fact, one test drive removes any doubts about Volvo's price.

If you've given a lot of thought to what you need in a car, come see us. We'll answer your questions, explain our Preferred Customer Service and offer you a test drive.

Then you won't think it's a lot of money at all.

**Volvo of Washington**

LPS

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Ask about leasing your new Volvo.

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